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V.

ST. PAUL'S IDEA OF JESUS

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## ST. PAUL'S IDEA OF JESUS

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### Paul's view of the Person of Jesus Christ

In St. Paul's view, the only principle of the Christian consciousness is the Person of Jesus Christ, which characterizes, defines, and constitutes it. It is important to state clearly the intimate and peculiar relation existing between the Apostle's consciousness and the actual Person of Jesus.

St. Paul was never a disciple of the crucified One, in the sense which he was formerly a disciple of Gamaliel. It was not his business to be eternally repeating the Master's words, or even commenting on them as the rabbi explained or recited the precepts of the Law. As regards the past, his whole conception of history is coloured by his beliefs. The narratives in the Old Testament are by him scarcely regarded as detailing events in the world of time and sense. They are partly ere symbols, allegories to be interpreted, partly reflections in the world of sense of that which is in the heaven.

There is little prophecy of the future of a definite character to be found in the Epistles. St. Paul accepted the views current in the Christian society as to the immanent end of the world and the Second Coming: at any rate he accepted them for most of his life. In one or two passages he ventures to predict the exact circumstances of the Parousia and the order



of rising from the dead. Here, of course, he failed as have all prophets of all times who have tried to foretell the external sequence of events in the future. But the religion of St. Paul is Christ-centred in a far deeper and far more realistic sense: it is not first of all a doctrine concerning Christ, it is "fellowship" with Christ (1 Cor.1:9; 10:16; Phil.3:10). St. Paul lives "in Christ," in the living and present spiritual Christ, who is about him on all sides, dwells in him, (Gal.2:20) speaks to him, ( 2 Cor.12:9) speaks in and through him, (2 Cor.13:3) To St. Paul Christ is not a person of the past, with whom he can have handed down, not a great "historic" figure, but a reality and power of the present, an energy (Phil.3:21; Col.1:29; Eph.1:19) whose life-giving power is daily made perfect in him (Phil.2:9).

We may sum up, almost in the words of the Apostle's view in regard to Christ. It is as follows: Jesus Christ was a heavenly being, ( 1 Cor. 15:47) destined from times eternal for human redemption, (Eph.1:4) in whom and through whom all things were created both in heaven and earth (Col.1: 15). Being rich, for our sakes he became poor; ( Cor.8: 9) being in the image of God, he counted it not an object of ambition to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave him the name which is above



every name, that every tongue should call him Lord (Phil.2:9).  
Ere long this name Lord shall descend from heaven, with a shout,  
and the voice of the archangel, (Thess.4:16) to gather the  
saints to himself. Under his feet shall all things be put,  
until the end, when he shall deliver the Kingdom to God the  
Father; and then the Son shall be subjected to God, that God may  
be all in all ( 1 Cor.15:28).



## II. FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

In tracing now his conception of Jesus we shall endeavour to follow as far as possible the movement of his own mind, beginning with the influences of his environment, the current thought of his age, the thought of the exalted Lord, and passing back thereafter to the historical, and what may be called the eternal, antecedents of Christ's present glory.

### (1) The Gentile World in the Days of St. Paul

St. Paul was a Jew and also a Roman. As the one he was able to obtain a hearing among the People of God, as the other protection as a traveller in all parts of the civilized world. The Roman Empire was one of the great political achievements of the human race in the days of St. Paul. It is frequently assumed that when the Empire was founded under a single ruler all liberty ceased. But as regards everybody, except the Roman aristocrats and plutocrats, all that makes liberty worth having really began with the Empire. It was now possible to travel, to study, to correspond. People were allowed to retain their ancestral religion, cities enjoyed large privileges of self-government, the inhabitants were free from compulsory military service. With the armies of Alexander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy marched also the philosophy and the literature and art of Hellenism; especially Hellenism spreaded in those days. St. Paul clearly shared in these ideas, especially Hellenism.



As to the origin of St. Paul's distinctive thought the idea is looked at differently by scholars. There is a definite school that would explain much, at any rate, of his writings as the product of Hellenistic influence. That school, which is a considerable one in Germany, is best represented in England by Professor Percy Gardner.<sup>1</sup> But Headlam definitely rejects that theory. He says, "it is true, of course, that St. Paul wrote in the Greek language. It is true, again, that Hellenistic influences had been brought to bear on Judaism ever since the spread of Hellenism in the East by the conquest of Alexander. It is clear, again, that a cleaver, many-sided man like St. Paul could not move about in the Graeco-Roman world without being affected by it; but none of these influences touched the heart of his thought. In no case did they penetrate beneath the surface. St. Paul was at heart a Jew and a Pharisee. His mind had formed in the Rabbinical schools, and Pharisaism had been developed on lines antagonistic to Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism".<sup>2</sup> A careful study, however, of the origin of his theology shows that Paul, like every other man, could not escape from his environment, or resist its influence upon his thought, and that he was a son of his race and age. In this sense we agree with Prof. Gardner and the school which insists on the Hellenistic influences upon St. Paul's thought.

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<sup>1</sup> Gardner, Religious Experience of St. Paul, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, p. ix.(preface)



According to Ramsay the Hellenism with which Paul came in contact had greatly changed from the Hellenism of the classical period. It had lost that delicate grace which makes it unique in the world's history, but which was fragile, evanescent and irrecoverable, belonging to a certain peculiar survive when those conditions changed. But it had become hardier, more practical, more common-place, and more capable of influencing the world. <sup>1</sup>

Since the time of Sristotle, Hellenism had been essaying a new and stupendous task, which was forced on it in the development of Mediterranean history. Greece had gone forth to conquer the East: Greek education and ideas were attempting to establish themselves in many things; but for the well-being of society there are two pre-emnent services which it has rendered to the world, and in which it stands almost alone: it showed how the freedom of the individual should be consistent with an ordered and articulated government, and it organized a system of State education.

It is especially in writings to a group of Galatian cities that St. Paul insists on the idea of freedom. He urges them to stand fast in the freedom with which Christ set them free, and not be entangled again in a yoke of bondage. He reminds them that they were called for freedom. He uses the words "free," "freedom," "set free," eleven times in this short Epistle of six chapters.

He has those three words only

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<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, The Cities of St. Paul, p.31.



|                              |                  |   |
|------------------------------|------------------|---|
| 7 times in Romans            | with 16 chapters |   |
| 8 times in Corinthians       | with 29 chapters |   |
| 2 times in the other letters | with 43 chapters | 1 |

But it may be said, the freedom on which St. Paul insists as a fundamental part of the Christian life, is only freedom from Jewish ritual; not freedom generally in political and social and philosophical relations.

In the second place Hellenic civilization had formed a system of public education in an unsurpassed and almost unequalled way. The weakness of the Roman State was that it neglected education. The Jews developed a system of home education, in which certain religious and family and national influences were impressed on the child in a marvellous fashion, so that they permanently moulded his character: and the supreme influence was exercised by the festival, at once a national and a family celebration, of the Passover, and the teaching about its meaning and origin which the head of each house on that annual occasion imparted to all members of the household. But Hellenism evolved a national and public education, intellectual and physical, of remarkable character.

To St. Paul, his ideal of freedom means Freedom of spiritual growth, and this freedom is the growth of education. And its very essence lies in spiritual education. This growth is also the education of the intellect and the character.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, The Cities of St. Paul, p.36.



In this sense we agree with Ramsay that St. Paul of Tarsus shared Hellenism, in other words, Paul could not escape from his environment, or resist its influence upon his thought.



## (2) The Jewish World in the Days of St. Paul

In order to understand Paul rightly, we must study of the history of his age and the surrounding facts. Also we must recognize how it was related to Judaism. "Judaism at the beginning of the Christian era presented varied features, and there were within it certain distinctive schools of thought. The fundamental point shared by all alike was the acceptance of the Jewish creed and life as it may be learned from, and is implied in the Old Testament. This, of course, St. Paul shared with all his contemporaries, and the belief and acceptance of it is assumed in all the New Testament Scriptures. In this there was nothing novel. Then there was the development of thought which we call Apocalyptic, contained in that strange series of works which extend from the prophet Daniel to those last writers who mourn over the destruction of Jewish nation. Here, again, St. Paul shared the opinion of his contemporaries. We know, from the fragments of apocalyptic teaching preserved in Rabbinical writings, that the Rabbis were not unaffected by this movement, and St. Paul clearly shared in their thoughts." <sup>1</sup> In other words, the Christian teaching of St. Paul was a natural development of his Jewish faith.

"There was, thirdly, the element which we call Rabbinical influence. This was the new element that St. Paul brought into Christianity, and it influenced his teaching partly by way

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<sup>1</sup> Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, p.13.



of reaction, partly by having given him forms of thought or categories under which he necessarily discussed various questions that arose. Throughout his writings there are traces of Rabbinical influence, His early training gave him his method of argument. The absence of system in his theology corresponds to the unsystematic style of Rabbinical speculation. His doctrines of Justification, of Predestination, of Free-will, and Divine Grace, were all influenced by his early education." <sup>1</sup>

"Then fourthly, there was Hellenistic Jūdaism. We know that he used the Septuagint, and knew it well.....He was acquainted also with the Book of Wisdom, and had been much influenced by it. There are considerable traces of its use in Romans. The language used regarding the resurrection of the body in 2 Corinthians seems drawn from it, and it provided many of the expressions employed in the Colossians to describe the attributes of the Divine Christ. In his book "The Kingdom and the Messiah," E.F. Scott speaks about Jewish influence upon the disciples, especially upon the heart of Jesus Christ. He says that the fact that a number of Apocalyptic writers dealt with a future Messiah is obvious. That the idea was widely current among the Jewish people, and that in certain circles it was familiar is plain from the Apocalyptic books. For the Kingdom was the prime interest with the Apocalyptic writings and apparently with the common people;

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<sup>1</sup> Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, p.14



the Messiah "only appears incidentally, in connection with the advent of the Kingdom. <sup>1</sup> A work now embodied in Enoch<sup>2</sup> gives the highest pre-Christian account of the Messiah - if the estimated date between 94 and 64 B.C. is correct. This writer pictures the Messiah as Righteousness and of sevenfold gifts, of Wisdom and of the Spirit of power; he is the revealer of all things, and he will recall to life the dead who are in Sheol and hell; he is the Judge and slays sinners and unrighteousness with the word of his mouth. There is nothing about him to make men love him, he is no figure like the Suffering Servant. He belongs in any case to no higher circle than that of the angels, and Jewish Apocalyptic as a consequence knows nothing of worship addressed to him. <sup>3</sup>

Cannon R.H. Charles cites some twenty passages from the Epistles to show Paul's acquaintance with the book of Enoch. He says, St. Paul borrowed both phraseology and ideas from many quarters; from the Greek poets; from the Apocalyptic writings, as the Book of Wisdom; from the lost Revelation of Elias - 1 Cor.2:9, according to Origen, and Eph.5:14, according to Epiphanius. We shall find that he was well acquainted with

and used I Enoch. <sup>4</sup> In conclusion, I would like to quote here Ramsay's idea of the origin of Paul's thought that "there can<sup>be</sup> no doubt that Paul learned it in the Greek cities, and above all in Tarsus." This was the great debt that he owed to the

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<sup>1</sup> E.F. Scott, The Kingdom and the Messiah, p.41.

<sup>2</sup> Enoch, chap.xxxvi.lxxl.

<sup>3</sup> Charles, Book of Enoch, p.xcix.

<sup>4</sup> ; ; ;



Greek (Rom.1:14). Partly doubtless, through the formal education needed to fit him for the sphere in which he was born, the Graeco-Roman world, partly through unconscious assimilation of the atmosphere and spirit that breathed through Hellenised Tarsusian society, his mind had been widened far beyond the narrow limits of the stereotyped Judaism. In fully conscious thought during his maturer years he broadened both Judaism and Hellenism till they were co-extensive with the world and coincident with one another.

### (3) Christianity before St. Paul

The record of Christianity before St. Paul is indeed brief and what is told us in Acts can only be subjected to the test of historical probability which is naturally a matter of opinion. Nevertheless, that Jesus was from the first regarded as the Messiah, now in heaven, may safely be accepted. According to the Book of Acts the preaching of Peter and the Apostles to this effect was popular in Jerusalem. What opposition there was seems to have come from the much-disliked priestly aristocracy: the people and even some of the Pharisees<sup>1</sup> seem to have been on the side of the new sect. This may be accounted for by the fact that the Pharisees had opposed Jesus for His supposed laxity in regard to the Law. The little society had abandoned Galilee and settled in Jerusalem, as Jesus had commanded them. There were constantly

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 15:5.



occupied in their religious duty of worshipping in the Temple.

Evidently, the new religion was spreading widely and rapidly as was to be expected. The Jewish world was sensitive to all that happened in Jerusalem and the preaching of the Risen Jesus must have been from the first widespread. Before St. Paul, a community, probably a synagogue, had been established in Damascus and the Gospel had reached Antioch. St. Paul was undoubtedly a great missionary of Christ, but there were many others, and he was not the first. The church of Jerusalem was undoubtedly sending forth its preachers especially in southern Palestine from the beginning. Further, before Paul, Christianity was becoming influential among the Jews by adopting the Greek language.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Foakes-Jackson, Life of St. Paul, p.52.



### III. SAUL OF TARSUS

It is possible to regard the life of any of those heroes who have marked the steps of human progress, either in a more naturalistic or a more religious way. We may consider them as the results of development working by law, or as persons sent by God to do a certain work in the world. In the case of St. Paul, it would no doubt be possible to find in him much that might be explained in the first way; but there are very few men in regard to whom such explanation would be less complete and satisfying. He is the very type of the inspired man, the man with a commission which he cannot and dare not neglect. His dependance upon spiritual support is overwhelming clear to those who study his life.

Of St. Paul's early life we have but a few glimpses. We learn that he was a citizen of Tarsus, which in itself is a valuable fact, for the character of Tarsus as a city combining the philosophy of Greece with Oriental mysticism was not usual. We know that he was of Pharisaic family, well instructed in the Jewish Law, and strictly abiding it. He himself says that as regards the righteousness which was in the Law he was blameless. His past had been very different from that of some of his Gentile converts. He had also been a highly moral Pharisee, and lived the strictest of lives. We do not know in what way St. Paul first came into relation with the Christian society. It seems certain that he had not seen Jesus in the flesh, and had been absent from Jerusalem when the fearful tragedy



of the crucifixion had taken place. When his enemies at Corinth discredited his apostleship on the ground that he had never seen Jesus, his answer was a reference to the appearance of the risen Christ.<sup>1</sup> Nor could he have been in Jerusalem at all during the great scenes of Jesus' ministry there, for he makes no claim to have direct external knowledge of those events. But Luke's statement that he was present at the stoning of Stephen is no doubt historically true. We are able from certain hints in the Pauline letters to judge what were the ground of St. Paul's early coming into relations with the Christian society.

St. Paul as a Pharisee was brought up to consider the study and observance of the Laws of Jehovah as the supreme aim in life at his home and school. Through the influence of Pharisees and scribes, ability to write came to be generally accepted as the mark of an educated or learned man. The scribes started a stream in its course that in Saul's time flowed like a mighty river. "Political, social, and religious life came to be dominated by a burdensome system of traditions, laws, and minute regulations, the external form of which instead of the spirit and underlying principles came to be the focus of interest and attention."<sup>2</sup> Thus St Paul, "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees," was born along by this mighty current which affected both his religious and educational principles. He inherited from his race a strongly

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor. 9:1; 15:8; cf. 2Cor. 11:22 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Swift, Education in Ancient Israel, p.84.



didactic nature and a unique educational idea.

The question of Saul's Greek learning has been much disputed. Ramsay believes that since Paul's father was a Roman citizen he was a man of wealth and importance in Tarsus. If this were true, Saul had abundant opportunity to take advantage of all the cultural influences Tarsus to offer.

It was in the Rabbinic college at Jerusalem that Saul was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel and instructed according to the strict manner of the Law".<sup>1</sup> It was here that Saul acquired his peculiar dialectic, his style of instruction, and his characteristic brevity which leaves many things to be supplied by the reader. In gamaliel, religion and its hanmaid, education, were exhibited to Saul as a concern of one's whole life.

This traditional Hebrew training having given Saul the technique, the cultural influences of Tarsus awakened within him the teacher's sense of appreciation, and his contact with the surge of the Roman world gave him the teacher's vision, distorted at first by his Pharisaic nature, but clarified and focused when the truth had made him free.<sup>2</sup> Then Saul of Tarsus became Paul the preacher, as it is now for us to see.

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<sup>1</sup> H.T. Juist, The Pedagogy of St. Paul, p.46

<sup>2</sup> Acts 22:3.



#### IV. THE CONVERSION

The most important event in Christian history next to the birth of Jesus Christ is the conversion of St. Paul. The conversion of a Jew to Christianity was not so unusual at the time there was any occasion for proclaiming the fact as a miracle; and if the church had never had the accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts, which show how the event was regarded a half-century or so after it happened, how tradition had given the occurrence a legendary form and embellishment, no one would have thought of resorting to a miracle to explain it.

The time when the vision came to him was when he was on his way to Damascus intent on the extermination of the pestiferous Christian sect. He was just entering the shady avenue which sloped down the hill at the foot of which Damascus lies; the fiery sun was blazing in the mid-day-sky, when suddenly a light above the brightness of the sun shone round about him. Falling prostrate to the ground in the amazement and terror, he heard a voice, which was something other than "the echo of his surging thought and feeling," saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Christ laid His hand upon him, claiming him as His own, and he yielded himself up at once.

This transforming vision which engraved "the face of Jesus" upon his soul took place at or near Damascus. <sup>1</sup> The experience was sudden, overwhelming, revolutionary. He had been one who "persecuted the church of God and made havoc of it."



But "straightway" after the event he went away to Arabia.<sup>1</sup> That he had "seen Jesus" is attested by many references. In 1Cor. 9:1 St. Paul asks, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" In 1Cor.15:8, in listing the appearances of the risen Jesus to the disciples, he writes: "And last of all as to the child untimely born he appeared to me also." In Rom.1:5 he says that his commission of apostleship among the nations was received through Jesus Christ. In Phil. 3:12 he writes in graphic metaphor that he "was laid hold on by Christ Jesus" as a prize is taken by a victor in an athletic contest.

Thus, his outward vision of Jesus became an inward revelation. The Christ who was revealed to St. Paul was revealed in him. The veil was taken completely away, and in his inner consciousness he knew Christ not after the flesh, but in the glory of His divine nature. He refers to the effect of this inward revelation in the words, "when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from by mother's womb, and called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."<sup>2</sup> St. Paul trusted this inward revelation implicitly, never questioning whither it might lead him. As soon as it came to him he sought to carry out the work to which he had been called by the grace of God, and set apart on the ground of fitness. He took counsel of no man, but went the way the Spirit led, fulfilling with fidelity

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<sup>1</sup> Gal.1:13,16,17.

Gal.1:16.



his destined mission preaching to a sinful world.

By the outward vision he became a Christian, by the inward revelation he was initiated into the apostleship. It was adduced by him as indubitable evidence that he was a divinely called apostle - that he had received his commission directly from God. He was an apostle "not from man, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead." <sup>1</sup> No ordaining hands were laid upon him but those of God. His authority to preach came neither from a human source nor through a human channel. It came direct from heaven through Jesus Christ. The proof that, he possessed it, as Campbell remarks, "did not consist in a parchment carried in the hand, but in the engendering of the apostolic spirit and the bestowment of apostolic gifts." <sup>2</sup> In his defence before Agrippa, he represents Jesus as saying to him, when first He crossed his path, "To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness in those things wherein thou hast seen Me, and in the things wherein I will appear unto thee." <sup>3</sup> As touching the Gospel which he was given to preach, he distinctly affirms, "It is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." <sup>4</sup> This may mean that his gospel came out of the personal revelation of Christ - that in that revelation he found his message; or it may mean that Christ revealed it to

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. 1:1.                      <sup>2</sup> Campbell, Paul, the Mystic, p.60.  
<sup>3</sup> Acts 26:16,17.           <sup>4</sup> Gal. 1:11,12.



him directly - not necessarily by formal words, but in all likelihood by inward suggestion and illumination; and that in that inner revelation, which consisted in an understanding of the spiritual significance of what he had seen, was found his message. St. Paul was convinced that he had a message so personal and so unique that he could speak of it as "my gospel."

It is clear that there then entered into the life of St. Paul a new force which inspired and cleansed it. A power, not himself, had taken over his life, giving him strength to do what before he had been unable to do. The moment this truth broke in upon him, trembling and astonished he exclaimed, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" To the heavenly vision he yielded instant and unqualified obedience. He was now ready for any sacrifice; ready to lift up the standard which had fallen from the hands of Stephen; ready to go anywhere or anything that his newly found Lord might command. Thus, the whole man was changed, and became a friend and servant of the cause which he had persecuted, an embodiment of the life on earth of the Christ whom he had hated.



## V. ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF JESUS

### (1) The Historical Jesus

The Apostle says that Christ was made of a woman, and that He was sent into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh. That is, He came into the world by birth, like other men, and He bore to the eye the aspect of any ordinary man. But though Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin, He was not, according to the Apostle, a sinner. He "knew no sin."<sup>1</sup> The mind that was in Him before He came ruled His life after He came. He walked in the Spirit while on the earth, The Son of God according to the Spirit of the holiness. Yet St. Paul conceived of the resurrection of Jesus. Thereby He was declared to be, or constituted, the Son of God with Power. Therefore He became altogether spiritual, even in His humanity the man from heaven.<sup>2</sup> The expression suggests that Christ, as Paul conceived Him, was human even in the pre-existent state, so that while on earth He was the Man who has been in heaven, and whose destination it was to return thither again.

Among the realistic elements in the Pauline conception of Christ's humanity may be reckoned the references to the Jewish nationality and Davidic descent of our Lord. These occur in the Epistle to the Roman,<sup>3</sup> which is irenic in aim, and might therefore not unnaturally be regarded as indicating the desire to conciliate rather than the religious value they

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. 4:4

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:47

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 1:5; 9:5.



possessed for the writer's own mind. Such references are indeed not what we expect from the apostle. His interest was in the universal rather than in the particular, in the human race rather than in any one nation, even if it were the privileged people to which he himself belonged. Then it is not easy to conceive of him as attaching vital importance to Davidic descent, in the strictly physical sense, as an indispensable condition of Jesus being the Christ and the Saviour of the world. He rested his own claims to be an apostle on spiritual rather than on technical grounds, and we can imagine him holding that Jesus might be the Messiah though not of the seed of the David, just as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews maintained that Jesus was a priest of the higher order though not belonging to the tribe of Levi.

It may be taken as indicating two things: <sup>1</sup> that St. Paul believed in Christ's descent from David as a matter of fact, and that he regarded it as a fact of some interest. The statement occurs in a passage at the commencement of his most important Epistle, in which he carefully indicates His Christological position, and it may therefore legitimately be regarded as counting for something in that position. Obviously the divine Sonship is for him the main concern, but it does not follow that the other side is for him a thing of no moment. <sup>say</sup> Why Christ is a Jew and a Son of God? Because he desires to affirm the reality of Christ's humanity, not in an abstract form, but as a concrete, definite-qualified thing: Jesus a real man;

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, St. Paul's Conception of Christianity, p.333.



a Jew with Hebrew blood in His veins, and possessing Hebrew idiosyncracies, physical and mental; a descendant of David with hereditary qualities inherited from a long line of ancestors running back to the hero-king.

The earthly life of Jesus, therefore, was appreciated by Paul, at least in the letters that have come down to us, more for its character as a whole than for its details. But even in his letters a considerable number of details are referred to: e.g., the descent of Jesus from David,<sup>1</sup> and the fact that, being a Jew, He was born under the Law.<sup>2</sup> St. Paul was himself acquainted with James the brother of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> and the apostle's celebrated prayer thrice repeated to Christ for removal of the "thorn in the flesh" presupposes a knowledge of the abundant Gospel tradition concerning the powers of healing possessed by Jesus Christ. St. Paul, moreover, mentions the night of the betrayal,<sup>4</sup> and the Last Supper,<sup>5</sup> and quotes the words spoken by Jesus on that occasion.<sup>6</sup> Other sayings of Jesus are also quoted as an unimpeachable authority.<sup>7</sup> The good confession witnessed "before Pontius Pilate,"<sup>8</sup> the sufferings of Jesus, His death on the cross, and burial, are of course familiar. One thing is particularly noticeable: St. Paul not only knows that the death of Jesus was brought about by a conflict with the authorities,<sup>9</sup> but he also, no doubt as a consequence of reports of what occurred at Gethsemane, regarded it as a proof of the obedience of Jesus to the Father.<sup>10</sup> That Paul is

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|---|-------------------------------|----|----------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Rom.1:3; 2Tim.2:8.            | 2  | Gal.4:4.       | 3 | Gal.1:19; 2:9. |
| 4 | 1Cor.11:23.                   | 5  | 1Cor.11:24 ff. | 6 | 1Cor.11:24 ff. |
| 7 | 1Thess.4:15; 1Cor.7:15; 9:14. | 18 | 1Tim.7:3.      |   |                |
| 9 | 1Cor.2:8.                     | 10 | Phil.2:8.      |   |                |



influenced generally by the current traditions of our Lord's words, even where he does not expressly cite them, is shown by the moral exhortations in his letters,<sup>1</sup> and other silent adaptations of sayings by Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

In his oral mission work the apostle no doubt made still more ample use of the Lord's words than was necessary in writing to Christians; he is able to assume on the part of his churches a certain acquaintance with the sayings of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gal.5:14; 1Cor.6:7; Rom.12:14; 12:8 ff.; 16:19.

<sup>2</sup> 1Thess.5:2 f.; 1Cor.13:2; 2Cor.1:17 ff.; Gal.4:6; Rom.8:8.

<sup>3</sup> 1Thess.5:1 f.

(Those argument is made by Deissmann in his book St. Paul)



(2) Jesus the Messiah

This true man, in whom the character of God clearly appeared, was invested with a divine office, the office of Messiah. The historical argument for the Messiahship of Jesus culminated in the resurrection, and this culminating argument is that on which St. Paul dwells. There was abundant evidence of Messiahship in the life and death of Jesus, but for St. Paul this was always overshadowed by his peculiar experience on the way to Damascus. The conviction that Jesus was alive and glorified, changed Paul from a persecutor of the Church into a humble believer. He had supposed that Jesus was a false prophet, and that His body had been corruption. Therefore the evidence of His resurrection, which came to him on the way to Damascus, was overwhelming. It shattered at once his old thought of Jesus, and put in its place an immovable conviction that He was the Messiah.

To the early disciples the resurrection of Jesus was the last and supreme evidence of His Messiahship; to St. Paul this evidence came through the historical Jesus; he found the historical Jesus through the Messiah. Proof of the resurrection was the end of the faith of the earlier apostles; but of Paul's faith it was the beginning. Accordingly, the resurrection of Jesus had peculiar prominence in Paul's thought. He preached it not only as his own experience, but also as the fulfilment of Scripture, though he does not indicate



the Scriptures in which saw a foreshadowing of the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> Even a hasty survey of St. Paul's letters discloses the fact that they make but one great claim, and elaborate but one great truth namely, that Jesus is the Messiah; and the most careful analysis only confirm this result. The central position of the Messiahship of Jesus in Paul's thought may be amply shown by a consideration of the names which he gives to Jesus. The name which is most common and is found in the greatest variety of combination is CHRIST, the Greek equivalent of Messiah. This is that which we usually find in the Gospels, when the question at issue is whether Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. Thus John the Baptist says, "I am not the Christ;"<sup>2</sup> Peter says to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ."<sup>3</sup> Likewise in the Book of Acts, when it is said that Philip preached Christ, the writer says, "the Christ."<sup>4</sup>

In all these cases where the article is used the term is an official designation. The great affirmation of that preaching was the Messiahship of Jesus in the foreground of his thought. It contains the one great assertion that St. Paul made in regard to Jesus; it is the nucleus of his practical Christology.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1Cor.15:4.

<sup>2</sup> John 1:20.

<sup>3</sup> Mk.14:61.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 8:5

<sup>5</sup> This compound name, Jesus or Christ Jesus, which Paul uses, on the average, twice in every chapter of his letters (37 chapters, 174 times), is the text of apostolic preaching, epitome of apostolic faith, Gilbert, the Student's life of Paul, p.18.



As to the Messianic equipment Gilbert mentions three elements: ethical, basis, knowledge, and authority. "It is plain that, in Paul's thought, the love of Jesus also was fundamental to His Messianic work. For, in the first place, it was love that led Him to lay down His life on the cross, that act in which the apostle saw the culmination of His service as the Saviour. Then again, it is the consciousness of Jesus' love of the Father, that furnishes the great motive in the new and upward life. Hence the personal character of Jesus, especially His holiness and His love, was fundamental in the Messianic equipment.

A second element in the Messianic equipment was knowledge. Less stress falls on this than on the ethical element, but at the same time St. Paul ascribes to it great importance. Thus he sums up the gift of God in Christ in the two words POWER and WISDOM, then a little later he drops the word POWER, and says that Christ was made to us WISDOM from God. This wisdom is then viewed under three aspects as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This wisdom is sometime set forth under the figure of LIGHT. Thus Paul assumes that it is the function of the Gospel to give light, the very light of God, and teaches that they who are in the Lord by faith are light that is, wise with a heavenly wisdom. When writing to a church in which some feared that there was a higher knowledge than that of the Gospel, St. Paul declared that in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He elsewhere speaks of these treasures as unsearchable riches,



and identifies them with the manifested wisdom of God.

The third and last element in the Messianic equipment was authority. This is implied in that title which Paul most frequently applies to Jesus, namely, the Messiah, that is, the anointed. For to be anointed by God for any work implies, as a necessary correlate, that God gives authority according to the nature of the work. If the work is that of a prophet, the anointed one receives royal authority. St. Paul thought of Jesus as anointed to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament, that is, to be redeemer of the world, and this unique anointing implied unique authority - authority commensurate with the work. And his work was moral and religious. His authority, then, is in the spiritual sphere, and is chiefly manifest, for the present at least, by spiritual means." <sup>1</sup>

For Paul, Morgan states,<sup>2</sup> Jesus is the Messianic Judge and Saviour of the last day, whose coming may at any moment be expected. And the Apostle moves in this circle of ideas when he describes Him as of the seed of David according to flesh, and regards the Resurrection as signifying His installation in office. <sup>3</sup> The primitive waiting for the Christ reserved in heaven has not disappeared, but to this there is added something new and distinctive. The Apostle looks to Christ as one who is even now on the throne, and to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been entrusted.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert, The Student's life of Paul, pp.22-25.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan, Jesus the Messiah, p.43.

<sup>3</sup> Rom.1:3,4.



Equally with God He is the source of grace and peace.<sup>1</sup> He disciplines and punishes the believer, averts trouble, directs the heart, establishes the heart holiness, guards from the evil one, confirms in the way of God unto the end.<sup>2</sup> He is able to make His weak servant stand.<sup>3</sup> The providence of life are under His control: "I will come unto you shortly, if the Lord will."<sup>4</sup> He dwells in the soul of the believer as a personal power, the source of every higher motion: "Christ in you the hope of glory."<sup>5</sup>

To sum up the thought of Paul on the Messiahship of Jesus, we say that the fact of His Messiahship rests primarily on His resurrection, and is central in all the apostle's teaching; and that the Messianic equipment consisted in a character of divine holiness and love, the possession of supreme spiritual wisdom, and possession of authority commensurate with the work of redemption. Jesus is also the Messianic Judge and Saviour of the last day, whose coming may at any moment be expected. "This brilliant and earnest young Pharisee, educated in Gamaliel's classroom, familiar with the hope of Israel, became convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and naturally painted Him in the colors of the Jewish anticipation. He is "Christ," "the Son of God." But Jesus had upset expectations in fulfilling them,

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<sup>1</sup> Rom.1:5,7.

<sup>2</sup> 2Cor.12:8; 2Thess.3:5; 1Thess.3:12.

<sup>3</sup> Rom.14:4

<sup>4</sup> 1Cor.4:19; 14:7; 1Thess.3:11.

<sup>5</sup> Col.1:27; 3:4.



and the Christ Paul knew in Jesus was vastly better than the Christ he had looked for.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Coffin, The Portrait of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, p.19.



(3) Jesus the Son of God

It is a common thing to say now-a-days that St. Paul's interest was only in the Divine Christ - that the earthly Jesus was to him of little concern. It is true, of course, that Jesus as the Messiah was the central point of his teaching; but it is equally true that he knew only of this Divine Christ through His manifestation on earth, and it was only through this manifestation that the redemption had taken place. In reality it is erroneous to make any distinction between the two. To St. Paul the personal unity of Jesus Christ was fundamental. there was no hint of any separation such as some modern scholars would make. "He who appeared in the flesh, Jesus Christ the Lord, was proved by the resurrection to be the Son of God. It would, perhaps, be an anachronism to ask too carefully what was the relation, according to St. Paul, between the two natures of Christ. Probably, however, Paul's view would be best explained by an analogy of human nature as he conceived it. He looked upon man in himself as fundamentally one. Neither his material body nor that life which he shared with the lower animals were to be looked upon as in themselves evil or unnecessary. They were a part of his personality, capable, therefore, of being transformed with his whole personality under the influence of the Divine Spirit. But the real man lies in his spiritual nature, and if this dominates the whole human personality, then man becomes what he was intended to be.

According to Weinel the title "Son of God" was



transferred from the Jews to the Greeks, the Semitic use of the word "son" was misunderstood, and it was taken in the sense that this heavenly being was not created, but had proceeded in some mysterious manner from the Father's inmost being; or it was even supposed to refer to the miraculous birth of Jesus. In the Semitic language the word "son" is used in a number of secondary applications."<sup>1</sup>

Thus in the Old Testament the "sons of God" are the angels, the Jews as chosen people are called "God's sons," and, above all, the chosen ruler of the future kingdom, the Messiah, is called by this title. There is a complete absence of all later speculations as to the relation of this Son to the Father. Weinel thinks that the name merely implies that Christ belongs to God, stands to Him in a special relation.<sup>2</sup> He also hesitates to determine "what special meaning St. Paul attached to the words "Son of God." For the most part he only employs it where the turn of the sentence suggests it to him, when he has to declare the relation of God to Jesus or the Christ. There is a certain solemnity too in the expression. With scarcely an exception it is only used in such portions of the letters as are marked by an especial revelation of style. So in the first chapter to the Epistle to the Romans,<sup>3</sup> in the fifth and eighth chapters and other places<sup>4</sup> where he reaches the height of his great argument; in the introduction to the

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<sup>1</sup> Weinel, St. Paul the man and his work, p.322.

<sup>2</sup> Also see the same, p.323

<sup>3</sup> Rom.1:4,9.

<sup>4</sup> Rom.5:10; 8:3,29,32.



first Epistle to the Corinthians: in the passage just quoted from the fifteenth chapter describing the end of the world, in a very important explanation; <sup>1</sup> in the Epistle to the Galatians, in the narrative of his conversation <sup>2</sup> and in the exaltant conclusion of the first part <sup>3</sup> - three times he called God by the same solemn title, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." <sup>4</sup> Weinel concludes: "Scarcely anywhere can we determine exactly whether by "Son of God" St. Paul would designate the high and heavenly origin of the Messiah or the special relation of love in which the Christ stands to God. The latter is, however, plainly the meaning in some cases. So Paul says God spared not His own Son, <sup>5</sup> that He sent him. <sup>6</sup> Very often, however, the word stands without any such expression of feeling, simply as a name for the Divine Being of the Messiah. But Paul, like Jesus, applies exactly the same word to Christians too, whom God has "accepted to be His sons." <sup>7</sup>

In his book "Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," Sir William Ramsay expresses his idea about the Son of God. The word which Paul uses there, he says, plainly the following points in his belief and in his teaching to the Galatians:

- (1) Jesus existed in the fullest sense as the Son of God before He was sent forth into the world.
- (2) He was sent forth with a definite duty to perform, retaining the same nature and personal character in the

<sup>1</sup> 2Cor.1:19.

<sup>3</sup> Gal.4:6 seq.

<sup>5</sup> Rom.8:32.

<sup>7</sup> Weinel, St. Paul the man and his work, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Gal.1:16.

<sup>4</sup> Rom.15:6; 2Cor.1:3; 11:31.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. 4:4.



performance of this duty that He had previously possessed. That is proved by the common use in Luke of the verb "sent forth," in its natural sense as the despatching of a suitable messenger, qualified by his personal character and nature, for the duty to which He is sent.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Christ, then was to St. Paul the Son of God. His spiritual nature had become wholly Divine. In His earthly manifestation He had appeared with all the reality of human nature, as well as with the outward appearance of man. But this human nature was dominated by His Divine and spiritual nature, so that that which was capable of being weak and sinful in others was in Him entirely transformed through His spiritual power. Clearly for Paul there was no dual personality, and no incompleteness of human characteristics, but the whole being of Jesus was dominated by the fact that He was the Son of God.

Finally, it is evident, that to St. Paul of Tarsus the Son of God "revealed in" him at his conversion represented a conception of Jesus Christ unknown to the primitive tradition and to the original apostles.<sup>2</sup> He had not recognized the Jesus "according to the flesh as the Messiah, but had vehemently and bitterly opposed him by persecuting his followers to the death. But as soon as he had seen in this vision the Christ according to the Spirit, the true Messiah, the divine Son of God, he was furnished with an ample revelation, so that he felt no need to

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<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, Epistle to the Galatians, p.396.

<sup>2</sup> Gal.1:15,16.



"confer with flesh and blood" or to turn his steps toward Jerusalem. He had seen not the marred and lowly form of the Son of Man, but the majestic "Lord of glory," and from this vision dates a new apprehension of Jesus Christ and new epoch in the Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, Epistle to the Galatians, p.284.



#### (4) Jesus the First-born of all Creation

It is well known that in the Christological Epistles ascribed to St. Paul, especially in the Epistle to the Colossians, a very high cosmic place is assigned to Jesus Christ. He is there represented as the First-born of all creation, nay, as the originator of the creation, as well as its final cause; all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, angels included, being made by Him and for Him.<sup>1</sup> For St. Paul, as for Jesus, it was an axiom that the universe had its final aim in the kingdom of God, or in Christ its King. This truth finds expression in several familiar texts, as when it is said: "All things work together for good to them that love God; "<sup>2</sup> or again: "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."<sup>3</sup> The groaning of the creation in labour for the bringing forth a new redeemed world is a graphic pictorial representation of the same great thought.<sup>4</sup>

It is only the complement of this doctrine that Christ should be represented as having the control of providence, or as the Mediator of God's activity in the world. This is done when it is stated that God "hath put all things under His feet;"<sup>5</sup> and still more explicitly in another text from the same Epistle, where Jesus Christ is described

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor.3:22,23.

<sup>3</sup> 1Cor.3:23 ff.

<sup>5</sup> 1Cor.15:27.

<sup>2</sup> Rom.8:28.

<sup>4</sup> Rom.8:22.



as the one Lord by whom, or on account of whom, are all things. If it were certain that DI OU is the correct reading, we might find in this passage the doctrine of a mediatorial action of Jesus Christ in creation, and not merely in providence, while from the reading DI ON the latter only can be inferred. But indeed, in any case, from providential power to creative is only one step. He who directs providence in some sense creates. He furnishes the divine reason for creation, and is the Logos, if not the physical cause, of the universe. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, St. Paul's conception of Christianity, p.336.



(5) Jesus the Wisdom of God

When St. Paul thinks of the Wisdom of God, he has in mind that which the writer of the Wisdom of Solomon calls "the Spirit of the Lord which has filled the world, and which holdeth all things together," <sup>1</sup> she that was the artificer of the creation, and rejected with God in his habitable earth, a "hidden wisdom" which the wise of the world cannot search out, but which as a saving spirit "goeth about herself seeking those that are worthy of her; and in their paths she appeareth unto them graciously." <sup>2</sup> Paul thinks of the Wisdom of God as "a holy spirit, only begotten yet manifold. . . beneficent, loving toward man, all-powerful, all-seeing, pervading and penetrating all things, a breathing forth of the power of God and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty, an effluence from the everlasting light, an EOKON of His goodness." <sup>3</sup> St. Paul thinks of this Wisdom of God as the spirit of revelation and redemption, which "from generation to generation passing into holy souls maketh men to be friends of God and prophets." He thinks of it as "reaching from one end of the world to the other with full strength and ordering all things graciously. "He believeth that "It is given her to to live with God, and that the Sovereign Lord of all loved her." "He believes with the Son of Sirach that this spirit "came forth from the mouth of the Most High and covered the earth as a mist,"

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<sup>1</sup> Wisdom of Solomon, 1:7.

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom of Solomon, p.336

<sup>3</sup> Bacon, Jesus or Paul, p.130.



that it made its throne in order that in the end it might go forth to the world as the four stream from Eden, watering all lands.

St. Paul believes that this creative and redemptive Spirit, this spirit of the knowledge, fear and love of God, this spirit of revelation of the purpose and will of the Creator, so hidden from the world, is the special endowment of Israel, whom God chose for this very purpose, that it might be His Servant to bring peace and reconciliation with the universal Father to all ends of the earth through the knowledge to him. "He believes that this eternal Spirit tabernacled for the redemption of humanity in Israel as a whole, and was incarnated in successive leaders of Israel by divers portions and in divers manners, in Joseph, in Moses, in Solomon; for this is the belief of the Wisdom writers of Paul's time. He believes above all that the Messiah, the supreme representative of Israel as Jehovah's Servant and witness to the nations, will embody all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge, comparing with those who had partial revelation in past days as the knowledge of a beloved son compares with that of servant of the household." <sup>1</sup>

"Jesus was also to St. Paul of Tarsus far more than a virtuous man or a subject for sentimental idealism. He was "the power of God and the wisdom of God," <sup>2</sup> the one Being

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<sup>1</sup> Bacon, Jesus or Paul, p.245.

<sup>2</sup> 2Cor.1:24.



in heaven or earth by which the true knowledge of God is made possible. Paul does not state this as a theological proposition and prove what we call the "Divinity of Christ" by a carefully thought out chain of reasoning. When he placed Christ "far above all heavens that He might fill all things,"<sup>1</sup> he expressed the conviction of all that his Lord meant to him, nor did he attempt to define in theological terms the precise relation of the Son (of God) to the Father. He was content to believe in God and to desire Him, confessing that all his knowledge had come directly from Christ.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 4:10.

<sup>2</sup> Foakes-Jackson, The Life of St. Paul, the man and the Apostle, p. 245.



(6) Jesus the Image of God

A remarkable extension of the thought which we have been considering, is to be found in St. Paul's description of Jesus Christ in Col.1:18 as PROTOKOS EK TON NEKRON: "the First-born from the dead." The expression is of course to be read in the light of a preceeding verse (15), which describes Him as the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation." The idea is expanded by verse 16, "All things have been created through Him, and with a view to Him." It is further illuminated by the statement of Rom.3:29, "He predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order to His being First-born among many brethren." The same thought is expressed by a different metaphor in 1Cor.15:20, where Christ as risen is named "the First-born (fruits) of them who have fallen sleep." Here the risen believers are looked upon as a new family, a new class or lineage, is we may so say, in the human race. And as He who heads the line is the Image of God, the Instrument and Ideal of creation, this new spiritual progeny of His for the first time fulfills the original purpose of creation: they are re-created through Him in that image of God which mankind lost or made of none effect by disobedience. <sup>1</sup>

When we turn to Second Corinthians<sup>2</sup> and Colossians<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, St. Paul's conception of Last thing, p.235.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor.4:4

<sup>3</sup> Col.1:15.



we will find the idea, that Jesus is the image of God, and we are transformed into His image.<sup>1</sup> He is an heir of God, and we are joint-heirs.<sup>2</sup> All the fulness of God dwelt in Jesus, but when He dwells in the believer, the believer also is filled unto all the fulness of God, and attains unto the measure of the nature of the fulness of Christ.<sup>3</sup> These utterances show plainly that St. Paul used the expression "image of God" in a religious sense.

In the Epistle of Colossians, St. Paul calls Him the Image of the invisible God, the one in whom all things hold together,<sup>4</sup> in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily,<sup>5</sup> and the head from whom all the body draws its divine increase;<sup>6</sup> but even here, where the situation called for the loftiest predicate which Paul could give to the Lord, he does not call Him God.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor.3:18.

<sup>2</sup> Rom.8:17.

<sup>3</sup> Col.1:19; 2:19; Eph.3:17.19; 4:13.

<sup>4</sup> Col.1:17-18.

<sup>5</sup> Col.2:19



## (7) The Incarnation

An other christological question of capital importance has still to be considered. It is that of incarnation.

"What was involved in Christ's passage from heaven to earth is most fully describes in Phil.2:15 ff: "Though He was divine by nature, He did not anatch at equality with God, but emptied Himself by taking the nature of a servant; born in human guise and appearing inhuman form, He humbly stooped in His obedience even to die, upon the cross."

(Moffatt's translation) When we endeavour to determine the precise meaning of these words two questions at once present themselves. " <sup>1</sup>

"The first relates to the exact force of the expression, "He emptied Himself." What was it Christ surrendered in becoming man? Evidently it was the "form of God," native to Him; He exchanged this for the "form of a servant." In modern kenotic theories Christ's self-emptying is interpreted as self-limitation with respect to such divine attributes as omnipotence and omniscience, a solution being thereby found for certain familiar problems presented by His earthly life. But such an idea is as foreign to St. Paul as are the problem; it is supposed to solve. Probably he had nothing more definite in his mind

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, p.66.



than the idea of glory, the glory that is the garment and evidence of Deity. Christ was rich and for our sake became poor.<sup>1</sup>

"Much more fundamental in its bearing upon the Apostle's theology is the second question, what was involved in Christ's assumption of the form of a servant? Christ as we told, was found in fashion as a man. To understand what this assertion means we must go outside the Philippian passage to other passages in which the Incarnation is treated in a more dogmatic way. The idea not only implied in the Apostle's whole doctrine of redemption but also clearly stated, is that Christ assumed our human flesh. God sent Him "in the likeness of sinful flesh."<sup>2</sup> This means more than that He was a god walking the earth in a human body. One must remember what the flesh signifies for St. Paul. When we have described it as the vestment and the prison-house of the soul that inhabits it we have not yet touched the vital point. It is the element of death. Christ's assumption of flesh involved His subjection to the law, which, as we shall find later, is connected in the closest way with man's fleshly being.<sup>3</sup> Further, it involved His subjection to the power of death. Most important fact of all, it brought Him into immediate contact with sin.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 8:9.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8:3.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 4:4.



Some, indeed, have taken the phrase "in the likeness of sinful flesh" as indicating as element of difference as well as an element of similarity; and it is probably true that the Apostle shrinks from an unqualified identification of Christ's flesh with the sinful flesh of humanity. None the less this is what his doctrine of redemption presupposes and what he certainly means. If Christ is to execute a judgment of condemnation on sin in the flesh of His body, and if this judgment is to be effective for the race, His flesh must be one with that of the race; is must be sinful flesh."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Moragan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, P.67.



### (8) Jesus the Mediator of Salvation

Everywhere in St. Paul Christ appears as the mediator of salvation, but in these two passages His mediatorial office is widened out into a universal and cosmic fact. God, Christ and the world are brought together, and God and Jesus are distinguished with respect to the relation in which they severally stand to the world. God is the ultimate source of things and also their final Goal. Jesus, on the other hand, is the agent who called them into existence. To His agency the world, whether of angelic powers or of men or of material objects, was its being. These cosmological determinations are common to both passages. But in the second several new ones are added. Not only is Jesus the mediator of creation, He is also the power that holds it together, sustains its order, and for whose sake it exists. The last determination may seem to contradict the statement in the Corinthians passage and elsewhere (e.g. Phil. 2:11) that it is God who is creation's goal; but doubtless the Apostle would hold it with some unexpressed limitation.

To the same circle of ideas belongs what St. Paul, in Col. 1:19; 2:9, says of Jesus as the mediator of the divine Fulness (PLEROMA) willed to settle without limit, and by Him it willed to reconcile in His own person all on earth and in heaven alike, in a peace made by blood of the cross."



"It is Jesus that the entire Fulness of deity has settled body, and it is in Him that ye reach your life, and he is the head of every angelic Ruler and Power." ( Moffatt's translation)

When St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, the seeds of Gnostic philosophy were already shown within the Church. There were those who looked upon matter as essentially evil, and therefore concluded that it could not have been created by God.<sup>1</sup> Between God the world there was supposed to be a descending series of intermediary powers through whom the work of creation was carried on. St. Paul brushes this heresy aside, and declares that the creator of all things is Jesus Christ, "In Him were all things created, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or others.

Another significant illustration is furnished by 1 Tim.2:5 ( Gal.3:20). "There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, a man Christ Jesus." Here are three separate classes - God, men, and a mediator between them, Christ Jesus. If men are here distinguished from God, so also is Jesus Christ. If the term "mediator" implies that Jesus is separate and distinct from men for whom He mediate, it must also imply that He is separate and distinct from the "one God" for whom He mediates. On

<sup>1</sup> Sabatier, The Apostle Paul, p.9.



both side, then, He is separate and distinct, but as yet this separateness is not positively defined. Thus he not only separates between Jesus and God by the word MEDIATOR, but he broadly defines this separation in a twofold manner when, on the one hand, he says that the mediator was a man. <sup>1</sup>

When we pass from these passages to the other, there might appear to be something of a change from this lofty tone: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." <sup>2</sup> "There is one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. <sup>2</sup> Through St. Paul Jesus Christ "shew forth his longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on him unto eternal life." <sup>3</sup> The whole incarnation is described in a well-known passage: "He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory." <sup>4</sup> The Gospel was given us in Christ Jesus "before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." <sup>5</sup> In these Epistles we find historical facts as to Christ's life referred to, but quite incidentally: His descent from David, <sup>6</sup> His good confession before Pontius Pilate. <sup>7</sup>

Again, "In whom we have access and confidence through

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert, The Student's life of Paul, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim.2:5.                      <sup>2</sup> 1 Tim 1:15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim.1:15; 1:16.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim.3:16; cf. Titus.2:4.      <sup>5</sup> 2 Tim.1:9,10.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Tim.2:8.                      <sup>7</sup> 1 Tim.6:13



our faith in Him." <sup>1</sup> In Christ the relationship between God and man, which sin had destroyed, is restored. By Him man ascends to God, and God descends to man. Distance is obliterated. The two are brought together. They are united in eternal fellowship.

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<sup>1</sup> Eph.3:12.



(9) The Pre-existence of Jesus

The most probable view is that St. Paul thought of the Spirit as the form of Christ's pre-existent nature. There is no question that Our Lord and the Holy Spirit are identified on some sense in Paul's writings, and it seems as if this must be the same intended.<sup>1</sup> The direct statement of this identity is in 2 Cor.3:17,18. What it immediately suggests is the interchange of Christ and the Spirit as the indwelling powers in the regenerate man. The ordinary explanation of this interchange is, that the Spirit brings to men the things of Jesus Christ, makes his life, death, teachings, and resurrection active influence in us. It would able be explained in part the fact that the Spirit dwelt in Jesus during his earthly life, and was the source in him of his supernatural and gracious power. The first of these is emphasized by the Fourth Gospel contrasts Christ's person with the Spirit who represents the Father, saying that certain things in Jesus came not from himself, but from the Father or the Spirit, St. Paul seems to identify them, so that we get the idea, not that our Lord's spirit was re-enforced by the Divine Spirit, but that the two were identical, in other words, that Jesus was an incarnation of the Spirit of God.<sup>2</sup> In Rom.1:4 the spirit of holiness corresponds to the flesh in the other part of the statement, and is therefore a

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<sup>1</sup> Rom.8:9; Gal.1:16; 4:4

<sup>2</sup> John 1:32,33; 3:34.



designation of the other side of Christ's own nature. But "the spirit of holiness" is the equivalent nature of the Holy Spirit, and probably a designation of the spiritual nature of our Lord as identical with the Spirit, and not simply inhabited by the Holy Spirit. The same identity of the Spirit with the spirit of Jesus throws light upon the expression, "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." The identification of the Spirit with the mind of Christ does not require this for its explanation, but it is greatly illuminated by it.

The pre-existence of Jesus is distinctly asserted in the writings of St. Paul. They clearly point to this idea. In 2 Cor.8:9 we read, "Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." The example of Jesus is here cited as a stimulus to the Corinthians. But how could it be so applied if the Epistle could go back no further than the earthly life of our Lord in the carpenter's home at Nazareth? Still more distinct is the famous passage Phil.2:5-11, on which the KENOTIC theories are chiefly based. He opens by describing our Lord as first "being in the form of God," and then, instead of grasping at equality with His Father, taking the very opposite course. He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men," etc. He thinks of one person throughout as the Son of God, who was "formed in fashion as a man," and afterwards



exalted to the highest glory.

Now we must turn to the Epistle to the Colossians for the completion of St. Paul's idea of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. In this late work we find that the Apostle has advanced to more exalted ideas of the nature and functions of Jesus than he had set forth in any previous epistle. The Epistle to Ephesians sets before us a picture of Jesus wedded to His Church, and in another image, Christ the Head of the body. But in the Epistle to the Colossians we see the relation of our Lord to the whole universe. He is "the image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation."<sup>1</sup> The latter phrase does not affirm that He is a part of creation. The universe is created; Christ is begotten. The title "First-born does not imply that creation was also begotten, for it is used as a name of honor for the heir. It suggests priority of origin and primacy of rank. This is clear, because in the next clause we read, "For in Him were all things created" (ver.16) showing that He stands above creation, which only comes into being through His mediation. In opposition to an incipient Jewish Gnosticism, which distributed the operations of God through a whole hierarchy of angels, St. Paul affirms that these beings, thrones, dominations, principalities were all created through Jesus Christ and unto Him.

<sup>1</sup> Col.1:15



Here Jesus is more than the Mediator of all creation, as He appears to be in an earlier expression.<sup>1</sup> He is really its end; all things lead up to Him; all were created unto Him.

I 1 Cor.8:6.



(10) Jesus the Redeemer

The most remarkable things in his writings is this, that St. Paul thinks of Jesus almost exclusively as redeemer, and he concentrates His whole redemptive significance in His death and resurrection. That Jesus communicated by His teaching and life a new moral ideal and a new conception of the divine love and mercy, is an idea that lies outside the Apostle's horizon. God indeed reveals His righteousness and grace in Christ, but only through the medium of the atoning death. Paul's conception of Christ's dignity was closely connected with his faith in Christ as the Redeemer. Jesus was for him the Lord because He was the Saviour. The religion of St. Paul, in other words, is a religion of redemption. Jesus, according to St. Paul, came to earth not to say something, but to do something; he was primarily not a teacher, but a redeemer. He came, not to teach men how to live, but to give them a new life through His atoning death. He was, indeed, also a teacher, and Paul attended to His teaching. But His teaching was all in vain unless it led to the final acceptance of His redemptive work. Not the details of Jesus' life, therefore, but the redemptive acts of death and resurrection are at the center of the religion of Paul. The teaching and example of Jesus, according to St. Paul, are valuable only as a means to an end, valuable in order that through a revelation of Jesus' character saving work may be



brought to its fruition in holy living. But all that Jesus said and did was for the purpose of the Cross.

"He loved me," says St. Paul, "and gave himself for me."

There is the heart and core of the religion of St. Paul.

Jesus, according to St. Paul, therefore, was not a teacher, but a Redeemer. But was Paul right? Was Jesus really a Redeemer, or was He only a teacher? If He was only a teacher, then Paul was not true follower of His. For in the case, St. Paul has missed the true import of Jesus' life. Compared with that one central error, small importance is to be attributed to the influence which Jesus may have exerted upon St. Paul here and there.



(11) Jesus revealed God as the Father

The Fatherhood of God, as revealed by Jesus in word and in life, pervades all the Epistles of St. Paul. It is there not chiefly as a doctrine to be taught, but rather as the gracious background of all doctrine. It appears as an axiom of Christian thought, an element as unquestioned as is the reality of the religious life.

It appears in the frequent use of the name FATHER. Thus each of the thirteen letters attributed to St. Paul brings the Fatherhood of God into its opening sentences. I am sure that this single fact is proof that the revelation of the Fatherhood of God through Jesus Christ had made a most profound impression on the apostle's mind.

Again, we meet the fundamental revelation of Jesus when Paul says that the distinctive expression of the Christian spirit, as toward God, is in the words, "Abba, Father." This is the new confession that is taught us by the spirit of God's Son.<sup>1</sup> It not only takes us to the heart of Jesus' revelation of God, but it does so in the most tender, personal manner, by using the very Aramaic word which Jesus Himself used in His communion with the Father in Gethsemane.<sup>2</sup> Thus it appears that the attitude of Jesus toward God was, in Paul's thought, the ideal attitude for the disciple of Jesus.

Further, the Fatherhood of God, as revealed in Jesus, is reflected from the writings of St. Paul in the prominence

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 14:36.



which they give to God's love. To St. Paul, as to the apostle who reclined on Jesus' bosom, God is a God of love. It is His love out of which the work of redemption springs.<sup>1</sup> Love is the one great-ness that God seeks to teach us.<sup>2</sup> The consciousness of His love is that which gives the believer the deepest joy and a courage that overcomes all foes.<sup>3</sup> His love with the grace of Jesus and the fellowship of the Spirit is the highest gift of which the apostle can conceive.<sup>4</sup> The love of God for us is fundamental in St. Paul's ethics as in the ethics of Jesus. Love is the fulfilment of God's law,<sup>5</sup> and he who loves is blameless before God.<sup>6</sup> This is a pure echo of the thought of Jesus, who teaches that by love we become perfect as the Father is perfect.<sup>7</sup>

The Fatherhood of God which is thus prominent in the writings of Paul does not differ from His Fatherhood as taught by Jesus. The term describes the character of God, and not His relation to a particular people. This is sufficiently manifest from the fact that Paul saw the love of God perfectly expressed in Jesus,<sup>8</sup> taketh with the other fact that Jesus laid down His life for all.<sup>9</sup> Thus the personal love of God for all, or His Fatherhood over all, is seen to be the thought of the apostle. And in line with this is his use of the name "FATHER." For he does not

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<sup>1</sup> Rom.5:8; Eph.2:4; 2 Thess.2:16.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess.4:9.

<sup>3</sup> Rom.8:38 39.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor.13:4.

<sup>5</sup> Rom.13:8.

<sup>6</sup> Rom.5:15

<sup>7</sup> Matt.5:48.

<sup>8</sup> Rom.8:39.

<sup>9</sup> Eph.1:4.

(compare 6 with 9)



limit it to those who believe in Jesus, but uses it at times, as the Fourth Gospel does, in an absolute sense. Thus, in Eph.4:6, he says there is one God and Father of all. Accordingly, His Fatherhood is as wide in its relationship as is His Godhead. <sup>1</sup>

Such, in brief outline, is the impression made on Paul's writings by the revelation of the Fatherhood of God which Jesus gave. The situation already made show that Paul saw this revelation of Fatherhood both in the life and in the death of Jesus. His use of the term "FATHER," which is a symbol of the divine, rests, of course, on the teaching, and practice of Jesus, and not directly on the fact of His death. But, at the same time, it is evident that the death of Jesus was for Paul the signal manifestation of God's love toward us. <sup>2</sup> It was this which proved to St. Paul that God will give us all things. <sup>3</sup> It was this which also proved the love of Jesus, <sup>4</sup> but His love was the expression of the love of God. <sup>5</sup>

This view of the death of Christ, which sees in it the highest proof of divine love, is that which the Fourth Gospel emphasizes. The significance of the death of Jesus from this point of view manifestation of a love which was also manifested in the entire ministry of Jesus. If St. Paul saw a revelation of God's Fatherhood in the life of Jesus, then he doubtless believed that His life had redemptive

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<sup>1</sup> Eph.3:4; Phil.2:11; 2 Cor. 1:3.      <sup>2</sup> Rom.5:8

<sup>3</sup> Rom.8:32.

<sup>4</sup> Eph.5:2,25; 2 Cor.5:14.

<sup>5</sup> Rom.8:39.



power.

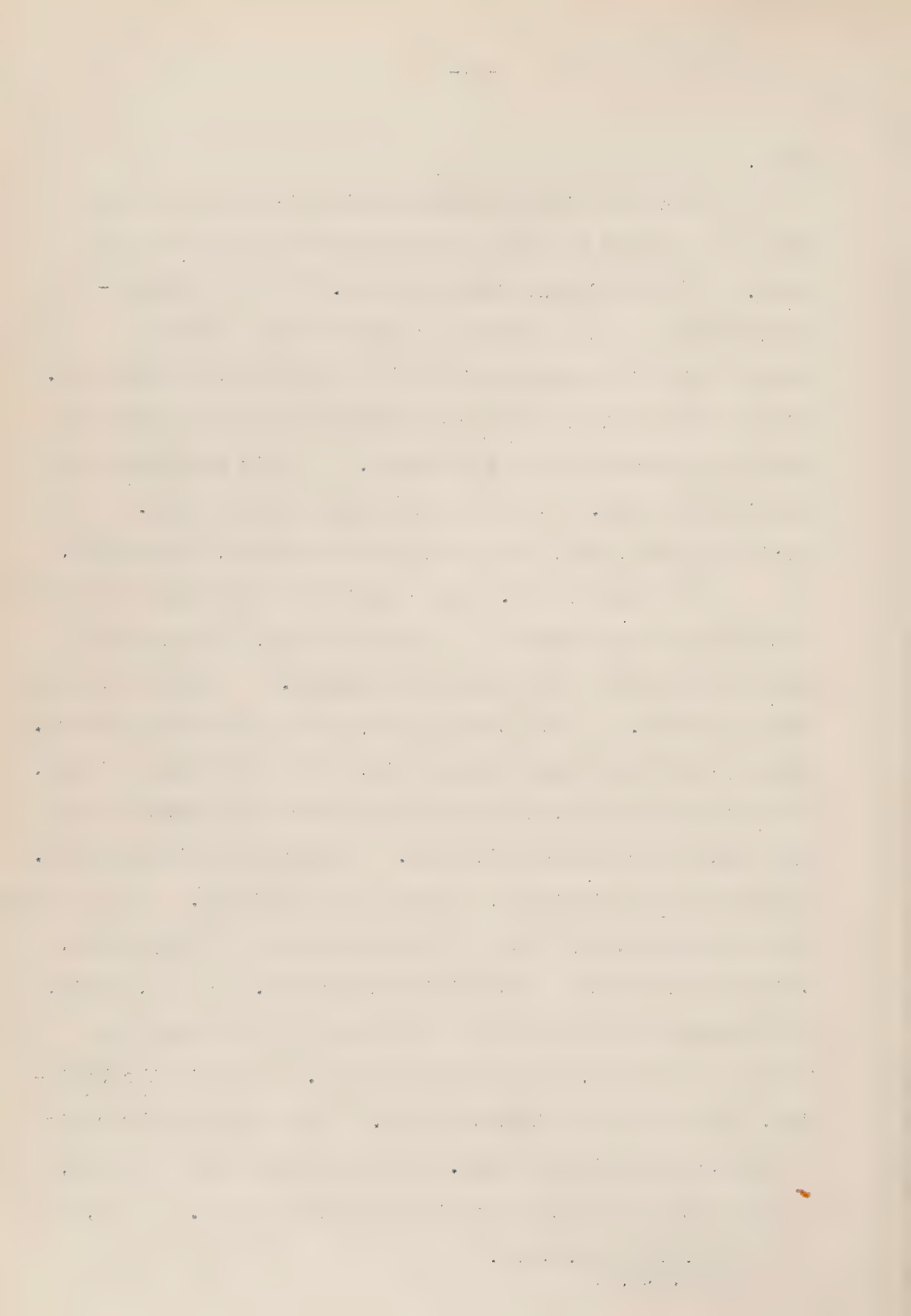
Now what is the relationship of the Son to the Father? of His divine pre-existence there could be no doubt. "God had sent forth His Son." <sup>1</sup> He who pre-existed with all the essential nature of the Godhead counted not this equality with God a thing to be grasped at. <sup>2</sup> Owing to the fact of this pre-existence there was a special relation between Him and the Father. It is described as equality with God. He is the Image of Unseen God. In and through Him, God, the Source of all things, has worked.

But how had St. Paul conceived of the relationship of the Son to the Father? As Son of God, Christ had a special relation to the world and mankind. He was supreme over the world. All things were made in or through Jesus. Not only were they made through Him, but in Him they existed. In regard to mankind, we have to remember that Jesus was not only man, but representative man. He was a man from heaven. As Adam was the first man, He was the second man. As in Adam life in the ordinary sense of the word came into the world, so in Christ all that was spiritual came in. So, again, as representative man He was the first to rise, the first fruits of the dead, among many brethren. He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead. As such the Church is His Body, and He is its Head. He has been highly exalted, and has obtained a Name that is above every name. So, in

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<sup>1</sup> Gal.4:4; Rom.8:4,3.

<sup>2</sup> Phil.2:6,7.



relation to the world, the fact of His close relationship to the Father, made Him the Representative of God, if we may put it so, on earth. To St. Paul, God was the Father and Jesus was His Son.



(12) The Death of Jesus

The idea of sacrifice in St. Paul has not even remotely the importance which is usually attached to it on the basis of a materialistic explanation of the passages where blood is mentioned and certain other statements.<sup>1</sup> The metaphor of sacrifice is clearly present in his letter to the Ephesians,<sup>2</sup> and possibly also in 1 Corinthians,<sup>3</sup> if the passover lamb is here regarded by St. Paul as a sacrificial animal.

We find in the first place ample historical allusions to the death of Jesus: it is an act committed in blindness by the rulers of this world,<sup>4</sup> a shameful death,<sup>5</sup> a defeat through weakness.<sup>6</sup>

But it is a work of God; it is according to Scripture,<sup>7</sup> and cannot have happened in vain;<sup>8</sup> it is a proof of divine love,<sup>9</sup> and came at the right time.<sup>10</sup> On the part of Jesus it is a confirmation of His obedience towards God,<sup>11</sup> and of His love towards us.<sup>12</sup> It was a blow to sin and a boon to sinners,<sup>13</sup> even to individuals. And the cycles of Pauline metaphor which illustrate salvation "in" Christ extend also to the contemplation of the cross.

By His death on the accusers tree Christ has redeemed us from

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<sup>1</sup> Especially those relating to justification, reconciliation, redemption, etc., which refer to the spiritually living Christ, and most particularly the passages in Rom.3:24 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Rom.5:3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom.5:7.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor.2:8.

<sup>5</sup> Phil.2:8.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor.13:4.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor.15:3.

<sup>8</sup> Gal.2:21.

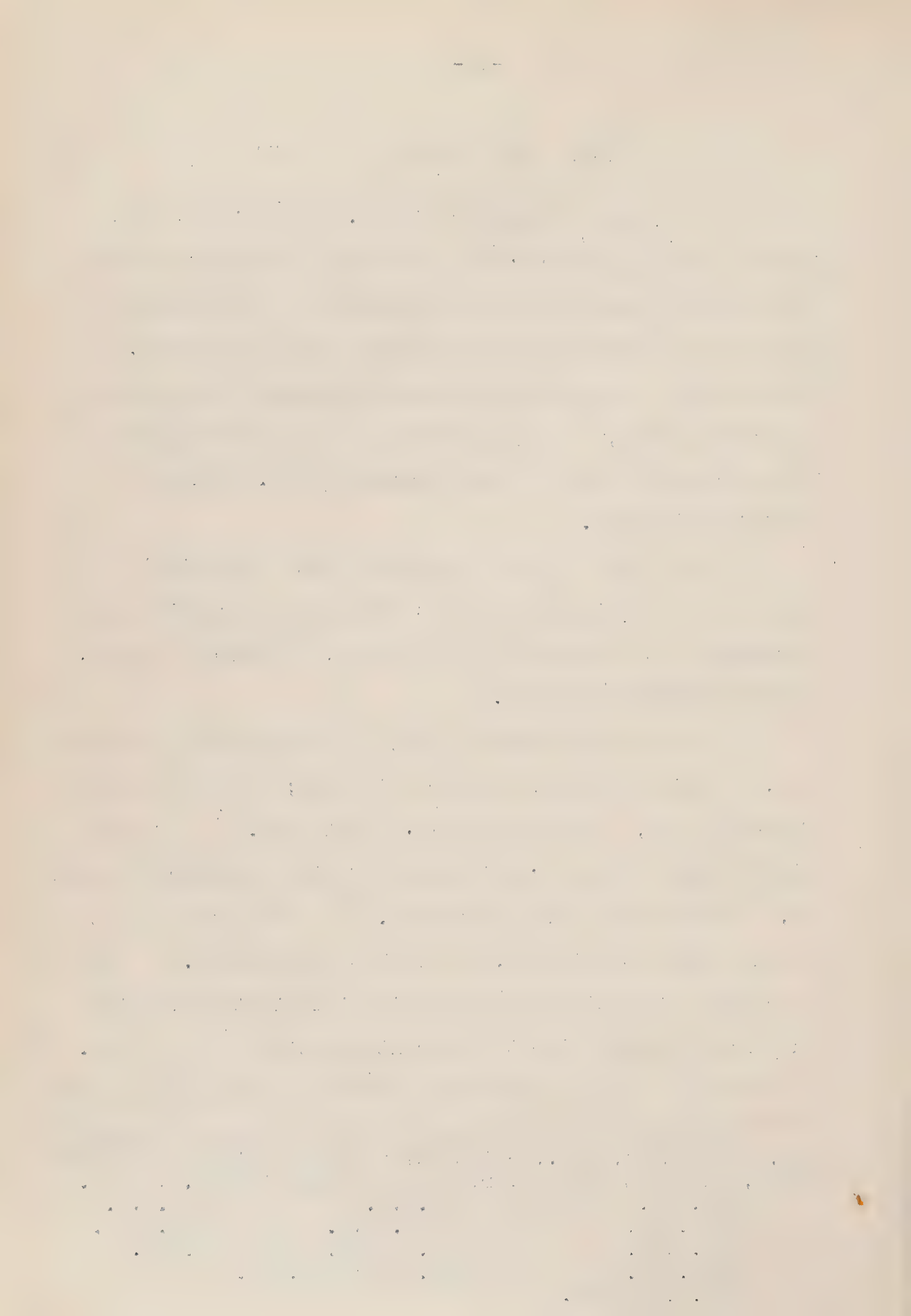
<sup>9</sup> Rom.5:8 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Rom.5:6.

<sup>11</sup> Phil.2:8.

<sup>12</sup> Gal.2:20; Eph.5:2.

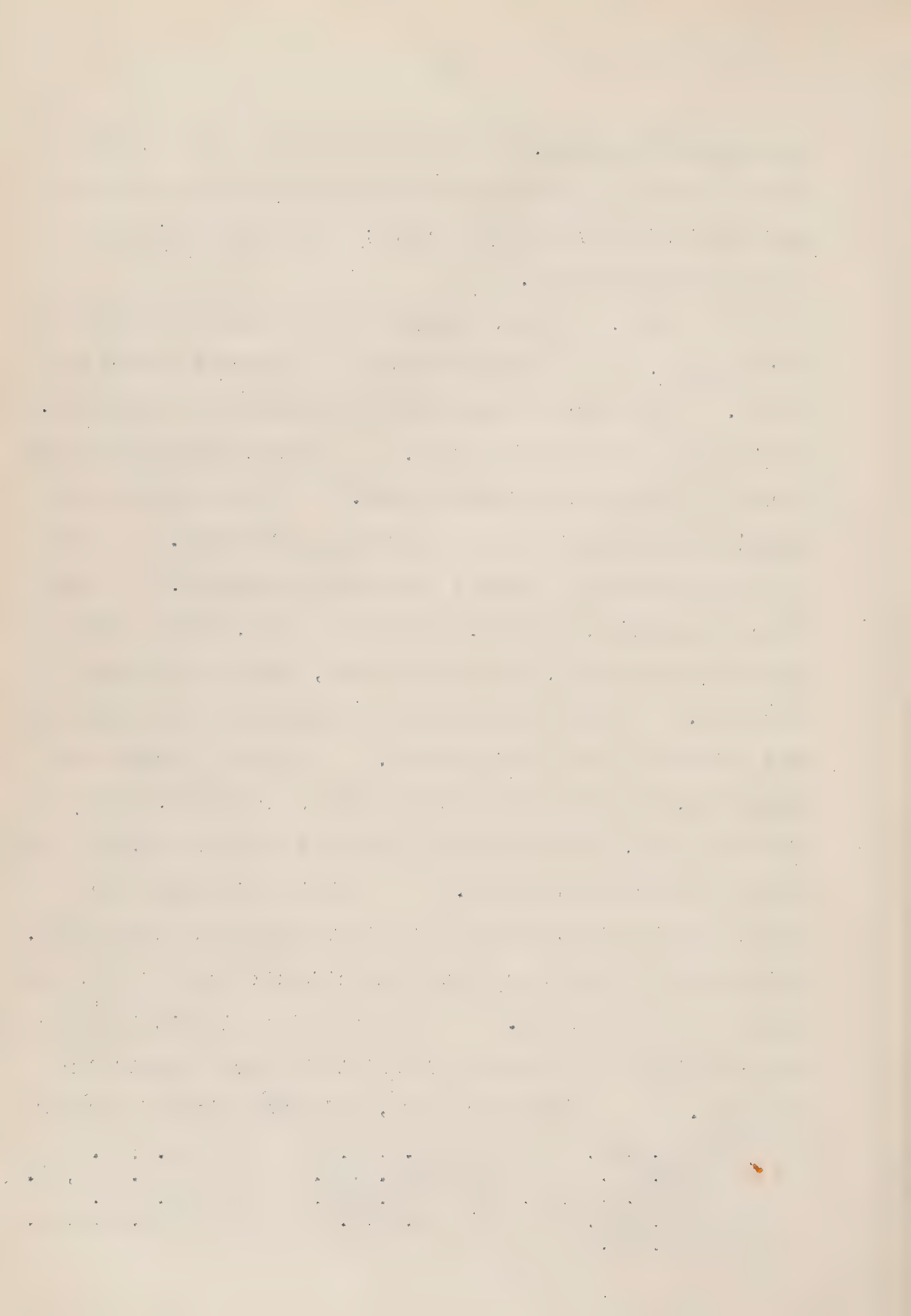
<sup>13</sup> Rom.6:10; 5:6.



the cause of the Law. <sup>1</sup> He has publicly nailed to the cross the bond of debt which He blotted between them both and God is done away by the cross; <sup>2</sup> reconciliation and peace are established. <sup>3</sup>

Thus, to Paul, thought of the death of Christ was fundamental. Christ crucified is placarded before the world. <sup>4</sup> The word of the Cross is the power of the world. <sup>5</sup> Christ died for each one of us. <sup>6</sup> Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>7</sup> In a similar way great stress is laid on the sufferings of Christ. Our comfort abounds as Christ's sufferings abound us. <sup>8</sup> This special emphasis, however, seems to be laid, not so much on the death by itself, but on the death, and resurrection together. Hesus was delivered to death for our sins, and was raised for our justification. <sup>9</sup> We shall escape condemnation, "for it is Christ who died, or rather, rose from the dead, who sitteth on the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. <sup>10</sup> "Christ died and lived again that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." <sup>11</sup> This death of Christ is on the one side the work of God, who apared not His own Son. <sup>12</sup> On the other side it is an act of self-sacrifice on the part of Christ who gave himself for our sins. <sup>13</sup> Christ loved us, and gave Himself for our

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|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 Gal.3:15.     | 2 Eph.2:16.   | 3 Col.2:14.       |
| 4 Gal.3:1.      | 5 1 Cor.1:18. | 6 1 Cor.1:23,24.  |
| 7 2 Cor.5:4,15. | 8 2 Cor.1:15. | 9 Rom.4:25.       |
| 10 Rom.8:34.    | 11 Rom.14:6.  | 12 2 Cor.5:18,19. |
| 13 Gal.1:4.     |               |                   |



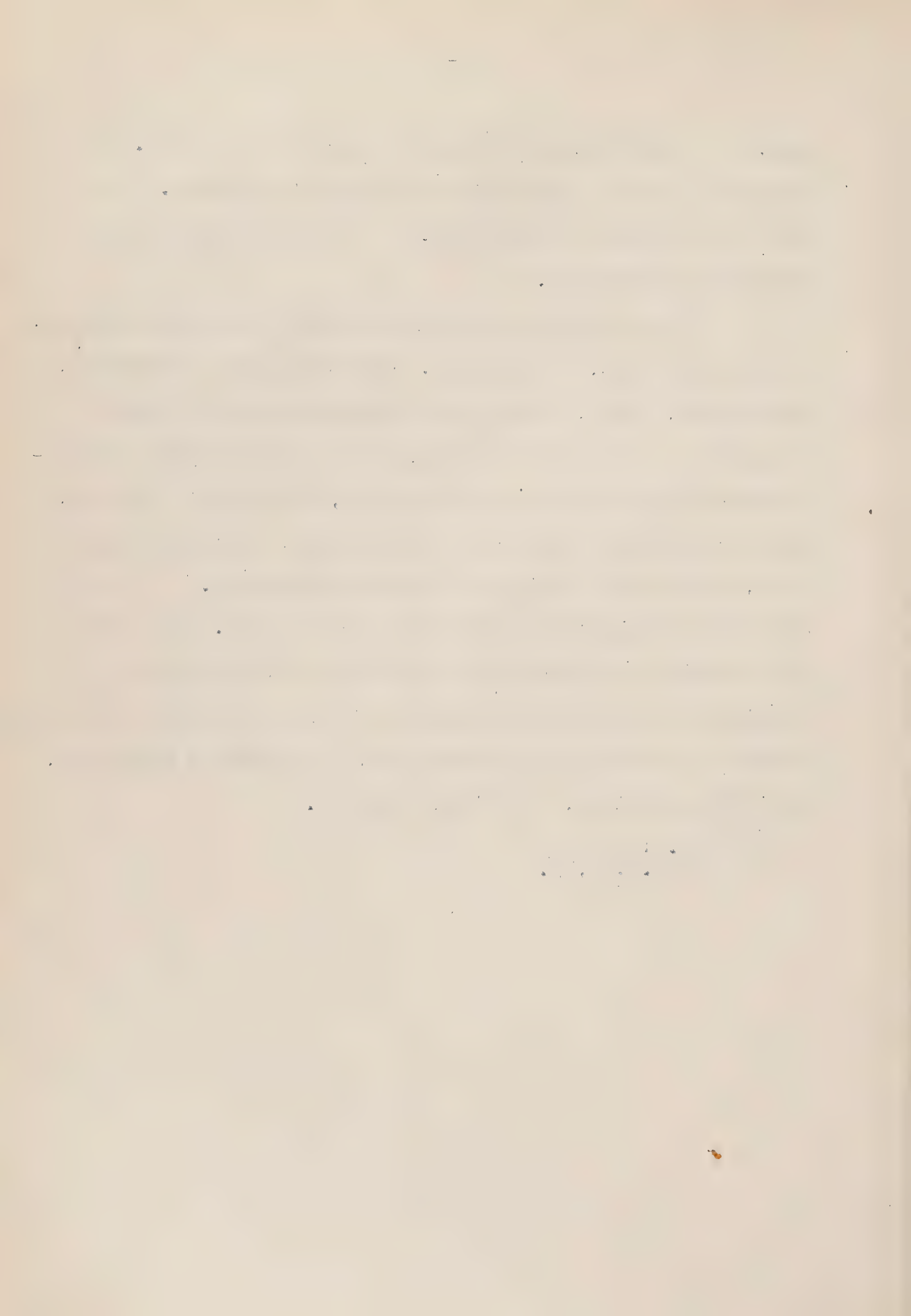
sins.<sup>1</sup> The death of Jesus was a great Divine act. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.<sup>2</sup> It was God's purpose of salvation. It was a great act of redemption of mankind.

This becomes particularly clear in the expressions, already mentioned, in which St. Paul treats the sufferings, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as processes of salvation which he, Paul, and the other Christian sphere in ethically and mystically, not only in baptism, but in continuous fellowship of suffering, of the cross, of blood, and of life with the transfigured Master. Of all the religious appreciations of the cross in St. Paul there are probably the deepest and most original: through the certainty of fellowship as member of Jesus the cross has become, instead of an historical conception, altogether a spiritual, mystically realized, and living reality.

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1 Eph.5:2

2 2 Cor.5:18,19.



### (13) The Risen Christ

St. Paul speaks of the death of Christ as the central point of his teaching. Christ had been betrayed, but before His betrayal He had celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples. He had been crucified and had been buried.

But this was not all. Christ had risen from the dead. To St. Paul this was a central fact of his teaching. "If Jesus hath not been raised, then, is our preaching in vain."<sup>1</sup> Paul had therefore taken much trouble to obtain evidence of the fact. His primary belief came, no doubt, from the power that had thus come into his life with firm conviction which he had that Christ was alive. But this was not sufficient for him. He had sought and obtained evidence that Christ had risen on the third day. This incidental statement implies a knowledge of the facts regarded in the Epistles, and of the empty tomb. For the Church had fixed the third day as that when our Lord rose from the dead, on the ground that on the third day the tomb was empty. Further, there was evidence that Christ had been seen by a large number of His disciples and followers, and that these visions had not seen merely appearance to a single person. On one occasion, certainly, He had been seen by 500 brethren at once, and many of them, so St. Paul

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15:14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. 1:10.



tells us, were still living at the time he was writing, to testify to what had seen. St. Paul believed His appearance were objective facts to which human testimony could be given, and the resurrection was the fundamental proof of the Messiasship of Jesus Christ.

The strong statement of St. Paul is that he had "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light."<sup>2</sup> Death is not literally destroyed. Men die since Christ came just as they did before; but the power of death has been destroyed: its sting has been taken away. A new conception of it has been given; it is no longer the king of terrors. One of the figures under which Paul represents it is that of a child falling asleep on its mother's breast.<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of immortality was imprinted on the mind in the very original," and was taught by seers and sages throughout all ages. At best it had been vaguely apprehended, and so did it become at times that it was in danger of vanishing altogether. St. Paul, as Christ's interpreter, brought it to light in his gospel, so as to make it stand out before the minds of men in all its sublimity and glory. In Him Christ exemplified his doctrine of immortality by rising from the dead and becoming "the First-fruits of them that slept."<sup>4</sup> His resurrection is at once the pledge and type of ours. Because

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim.1:10.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor.15:18.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor.15:20.



He rose we shall rise; and in the way in which He rose we shall rise. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." <sup>1</sup> By the operation of the creative spirit of life which Christ imparts, we shall be transformed and transfigured into the heavenly image which He bore when His disciples saw Him after His resurrection.

It is possible to collect quite a number of passages from Paul in which the rising of Jesus from the dead is described as of central significance among God's acts. <sup>2</sup> The following are Paul's convictions concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and we see how old Biblical and Pharisaic beliefs have amalgamated with old apostolic traditions <sup>3</sup> under the influence of his own personal experience on the road to Damascus. The resurrection is the miraculous work of God and took place on "the third day according to the Scriptures." <sup>4</sup> It is identical with the "Exaltation" and the recommencement of the spiritual life of Jesus in glory with the Father. <sup>5</sup> It is not fleshly, <sup>6</sup> but it gives to the now living Christ probably by the process spoken of as "changing" <sup>7</sup> or "transformation" a spiritual heavenly body. <sup>8</sup> It is victory over death, <sup>9</sup> and it does away with the puzzle of the cross. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15:49.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 15:3.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. 2:9.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 15:54 ff.

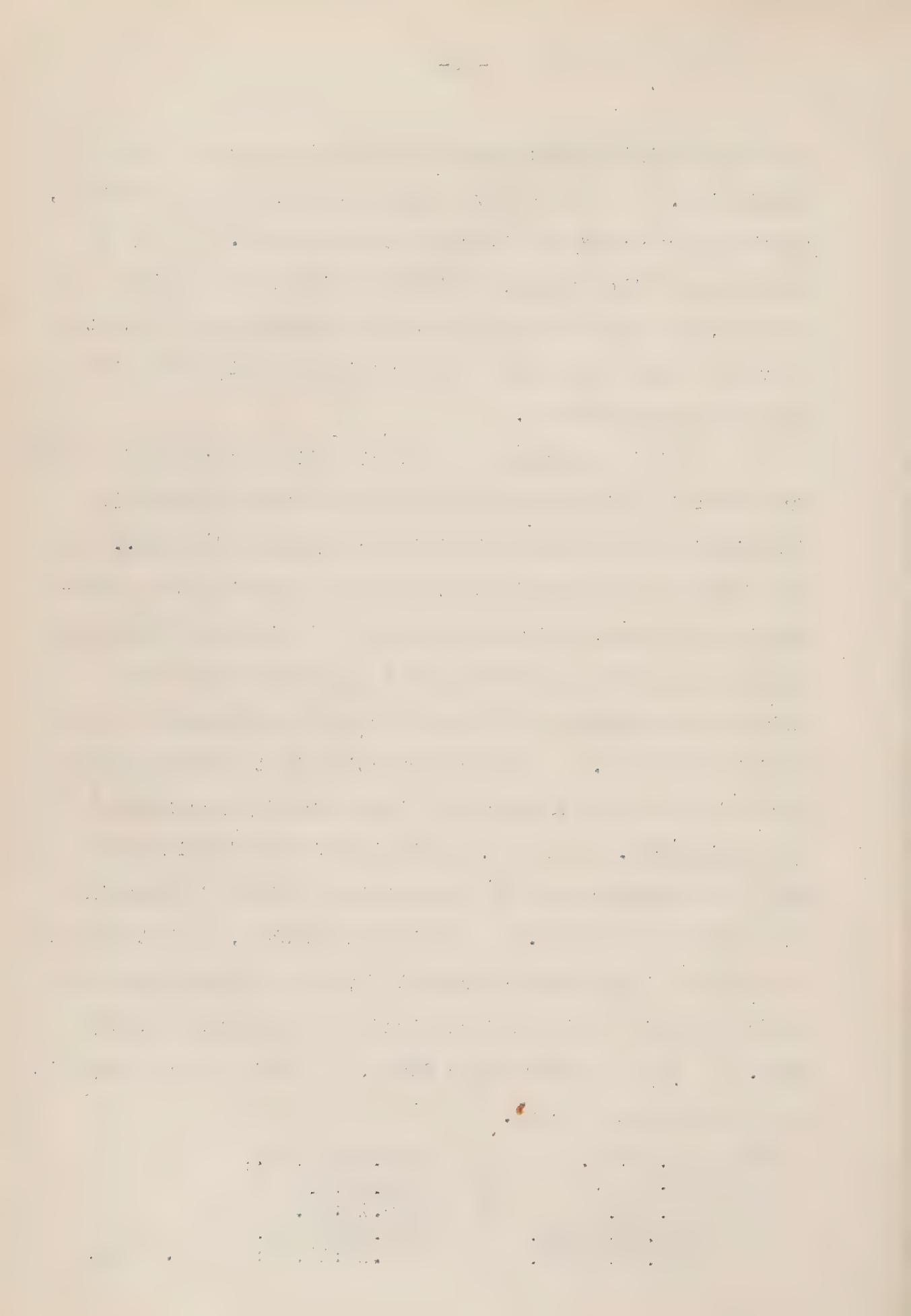
<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:14, 17,;

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 15:4.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 15:50.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. 15:35-51.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. 15:14, 17; 2 Cor. 13:4.



#### (14) The Spiritual Christ

There is nothing more luminous or creatively original in St. Paul's thought than his living correlation of Christ and the Spirit as they are manifested in experience. It is not merely that the phenomena of the Spirit are for him decisive proof of Christ's Messianic position; still further, the presence of the Spirit as a fact of power in the living, life is a self-communication of the Lord Jesus, who as Spirit dominated the new order of being into which Christian men have been translated. Spirit means supernatural power, yet not for St. Paul power revealed most typically in ecstatic rapture, but the ethical force from which spring such normal Christian graces as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and kindness,<sup>1</sup> which he sees to be more wonderful by far than speaking with tongues. In Dr. Moffatt's words, "his first experience of the Lord was a vision of Jesus as the risen and exalted Christ. The reality of Christ's nature was Spirit, on his view; Jesus was installed or constituted Son of God with full powers by the resurrection, which revealed and realized his true nature as life-giving Spirit."<sup>2</sup> His life in the flesh had limited him. It was a phase of being which could not do justice to him. But when that temporary impoverishment of nature was over, the heavenly reality shone out in its fulness. The Spirit radiated on men, it was poured into their hearts, as

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 5:22.

<sup>2</sup> Mackintosh, The doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, p.59.



the Spirit of one who had died and risen for the sake of men. To St. Paul the Spirit meant the gracious power of God which evoke faith in Jesus as the crucified and risen Christ, and then mediated to the receptive, obedient life all that the Lord was and did for his own people. -life

"in the spirit," his characteristic term for personal religion, can have its source only in the exalted or spiritual Christ, so that, when he describes men as being "in Christ" or "in the Christ," he is thinking not of two rival or parallel realities, but of one revolutionary experience seen from two points of view; for life flows to men from Christ and the Spirit indifferently. The ground of this epoch-making combination is clearly to be sought in his conversion. He had met the Exalted One face to face; and that spiritual event, in which the Spirit was energing, had had the Lord Jesus for concrete and substantial content. This one for all fixed his conception of the Spirit, leading it precision of outline, and protecting it against the wandering and unethical fancies of paganism. The Spirit of God, long promised for the latter days, was now known to be the very Spirit of Jesus.

In his book St. Paul Deissmann mentions the Hellenistic and more mystical phase of his experience of Christ:<sup>1</sup> the Living One is not far away beyond cloud and

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<sup>1</sup> P. 125.



stars, but present on this poor earth, where He lives and rules among his own. Here, too, there inspiration to be found in the Septuagint, and Paul himself is responsible for some significant formulation: "The Lord is the Spirit," <sup>1</sup> "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit," <sup>2</sup> "He joined unto the Lord is one Spirit," <sup>3</sup> and so on. Still more important perhaps than lines of such symbolical character as these is the fact that in numerous passages Paul makes statements about Christ and about the Spirit in precisely equivalent terms. This is specially observable in the parallelism of the mystical formulae "in Christ" and in the (Holy) "Spirit." The formula "in the Spirit," which occurs only nineteen times in St. Paul, is connected in nearly all these passages with the same specifically Pauline fundamental notions as the formula "in Christ." Faith, <sup>4</sup> righteousness, <sup>5</sup> justification, <sup>6</sup> Being, <sup>7</sup> standing, <sup>8</sup> rejoicing, <sup>9</sup> and joy, free gift, <sup>10</sup> love, <sup>11</sup> peace, <sup>12</sup> sanctification, <sup>13</sup> sealing, <sup>14</sup> circumcision, <sup>15</sup> bearing witness, <sup>16</sup> speaking, <sup>17</sup> being filled, <sup>18</sup> body, <sup>19</sup> a temple of God, <sup>20</sup> all these things the Christian sees and experiences in the Spirit. <sup>21</sup>

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 1 Cor.3:17.                 | 2 1 Cor.15:45.              |
| 3 ; 6:7.                      | 4 Gal.3:26 etc; 1 Cor.12:9. |
| 5 2 Cor.5:21, etc.            | 6 Gal.2:17; 1 Cor.6:11.     |
| 7 1 Cor.1:30                  | 8 Phil.4:1, etc:1:27.       |
| 9 Phil.2:1; Rom.14:17.        | 10 Rom.6:23 1Cor.1:8.       |
| 11 Rom.8:39; Col.1:8.         | 12 Phil.1:13; Eph.4:30.     |
| 13 1 Cor.1:2; Rom.15:16.      | 14 Eph.4:17; Rom.9:1.       |
| 15 Col.2:11; Rom.2:19.        | 16 Eph.4:17; Rom.9:1.       |
| 17 2 Cor.1:10; Rom.2:19.      | 18 Col.1:10; Eph.5:18.      |
| 19 Rom.12:5; 1Cor.2:13.       | 20 Eph.2:22, 21.            |
| 21 Deismann, St. Paul, p.126. |                             |



(15) The Second Coming of Jesus

We hear in the New Testament of the second coming of the Lord is in the Corinthian church, especially in the Thessalonian church, and the description of his hope in the book is the most apocalyptic of all of the New Testament outside the Book of Revelation. St. Paul introduced the matter in his First Epistle to the Thessalonian in which he said:

We do not want you to be under any misapprehension, brothers, about those who are falling asleep. You must not forgive for them, as others do who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then by means of Jesus God will bring back with him those have fallen asleep. For we can assure you, on the Lord's own authority, that those of us who will still be living when the Lord comes will have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, at the summons, when the archangel calls and God's trumpet sounds, will come down from heaven, and first those who died in union with Christ will rise; then those of us who are still living will be caught up with them on clouds into the air to meet the Lord, and we shall be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage one another with this truth.

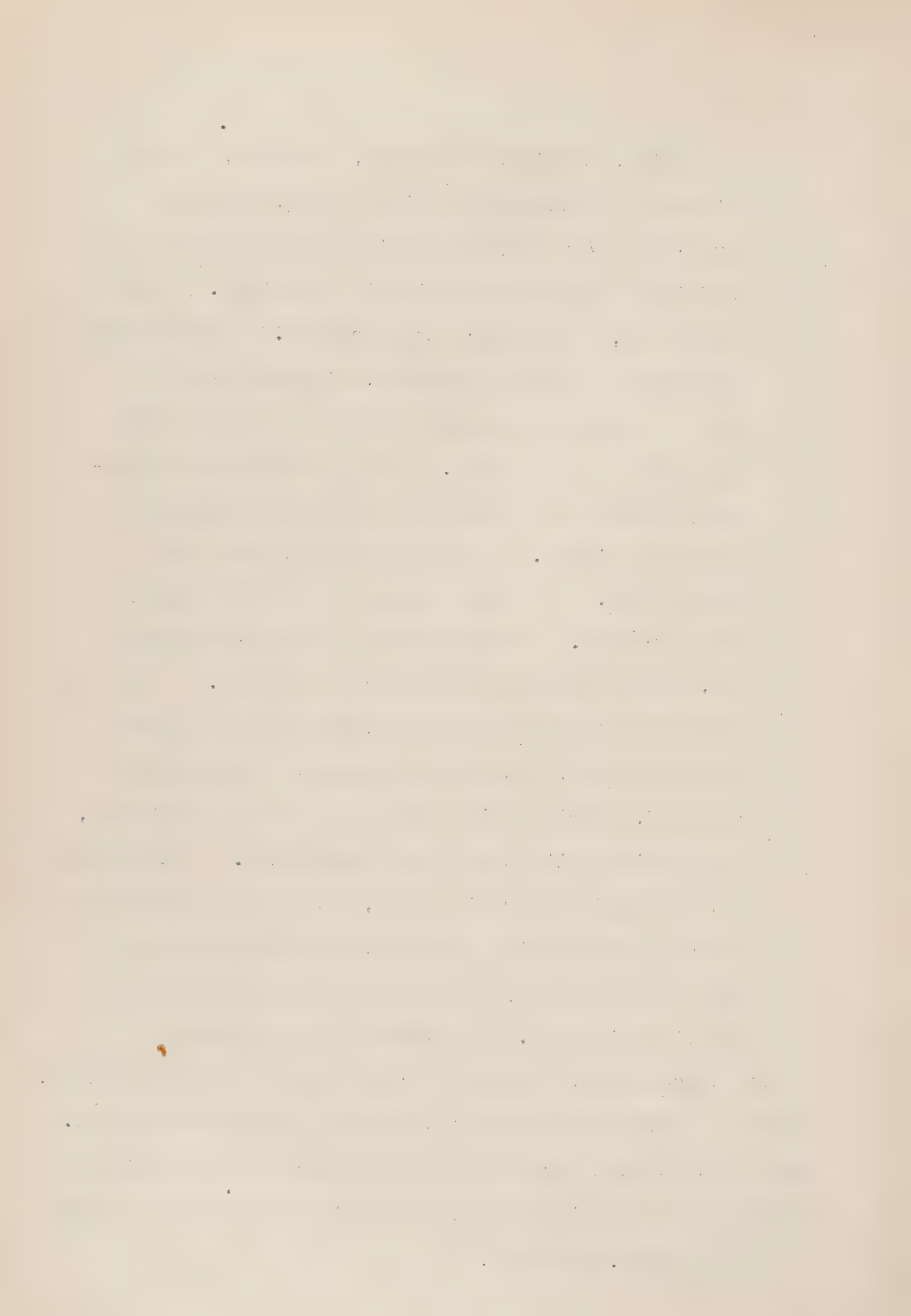


But as to times and dates, brothers, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves know perfectly well that the Day of the Lord is to come like a thief in the night. When people say, "What peace and security!" then suddenly destruction will be upon them, like birth-pains upon a woman about to give birth to a child, and there will be no escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, so that that Day should surprise you like thieves. You all belong to the light and the day. We have nothing to do with night or with darkness. So we must not sleep like other men, but we must be vigilant and composed. For those who sleep at night and those who get drunk do so at night, but we who belong to day must be composed, wearing faith and love for a coat of mail, and helmeted with the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for his wrath, but to gain salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, who died for us so that whether we are still alive or fall asleep we may live with him.<sup>1</sup> (Goodspeed's translation)

But these words, instead of comforting the Thessalonians, appear to have almost thrown them into a panic so that St. Paul wrote then a second Epistle in which he hastened to correct the wrong impression they had received from or the

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<sup>1</sup> I Thess. 4:13-5:10.

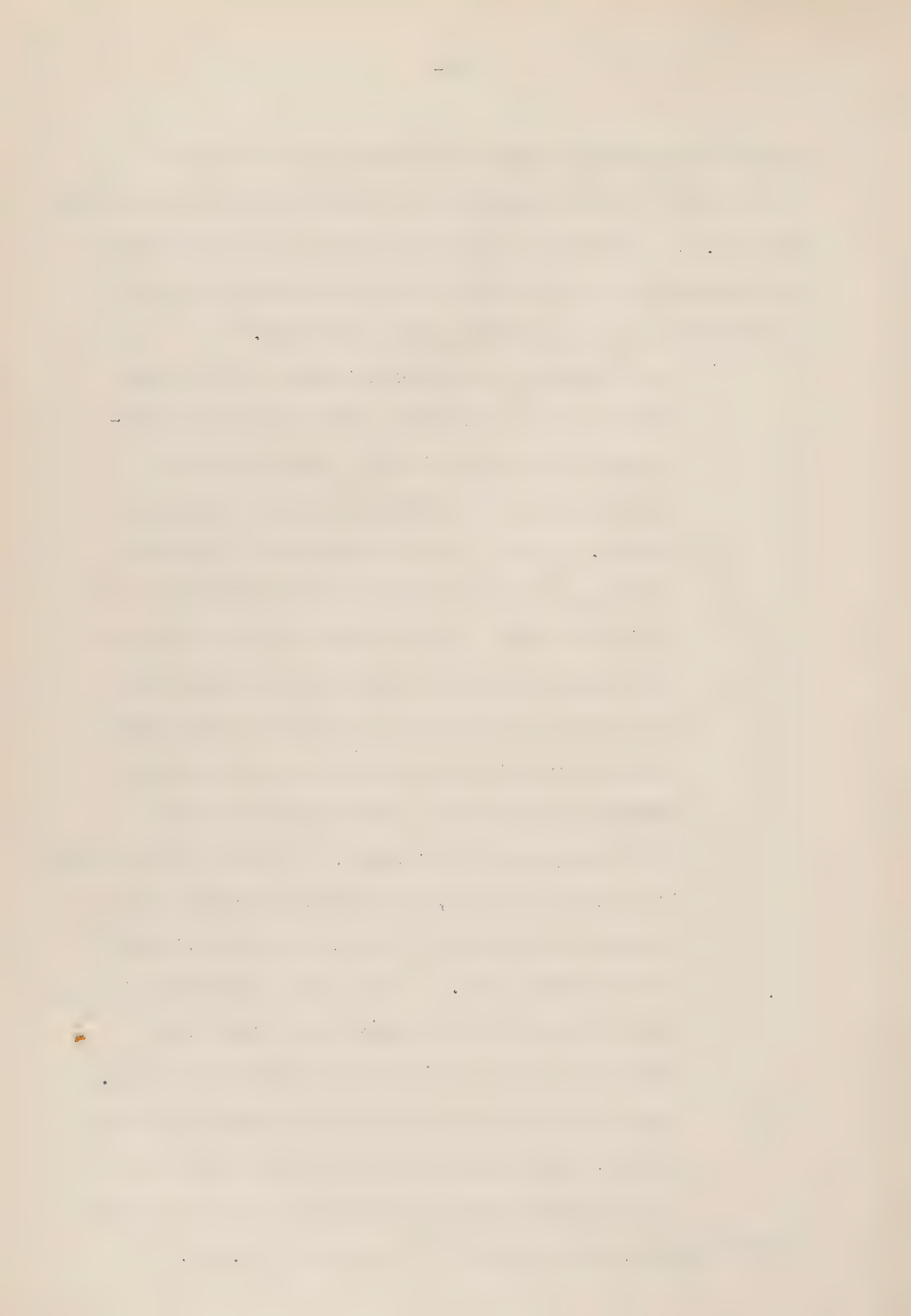


wrong interpretation they had placed on his words. In other words, he was compelled to elaborate his eschatology further. "He finds occasion early in this missive to call attention to the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked in that great day." <sup>1</sup>

As a result, we ourselves speak of you, with pride in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in the face of all the persecutions and troubles you are having to endure. This is a proof of God's justice in judging, and it is to prove you worthy of the Kingdom of God, for the sake of which you are suffering, since God considers it only just to repay with suffering, those who are making you suffer and to give rest to you who are suffering and to us, when our Lord Jesus Christ appears from heaven, with his mighty angels in a plaze of fire, and takes vengeance on the godless who will not listen to the good news of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal ruin and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and his pglorious might, when on the Day he comes to be honored in his people, and wondered at in all who believe in him - because our testimony has been confirmed

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<sup>1</sup> McCown, The Promise of His Coming, p.170.



in you.<sup>1</sup> (Goodspeed's translation)

It is thus a singular fact that the first time this subject was introduced into a Christian church it caused misunderstanding and trouble, and this unhappy fate seems to have attended it ever since. So St. Paul returns to their special difficulty. The Lord is surely coming, and that within their lifetime, but the time is not yet.

St. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the Thessalonian church in union with God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and give you peace.

We always have to thank God for you, brothers, as it is right that we should, because your faith is growing so wonderfully and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.<sup>1</sup>

Now, then, did Paul compose and reassure these excited and disturbed converts of his as to this event. St. Paul telling them that "it will not be" until something else happens first, and this prior event was "the falling away" that must "come first" and the further event of the appearing of "the man of sin" that must first "be revealed." We may remark at once that this contradicts the premillenarian theory that the interpretation of any event before the

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. 2:1-4 (Goodspeed's translation).



coming of Christ renders it impossible to "watch". This "man of sin" admittedly has not yet been revealed. Snowden thinks that this "man of sin" was supposed to be the persecuting Roman emperor or his pagan high priest.<sup>1</sup>

We draw from this incident the conclusion that according to St. Paul's teaching the way to watch for Christ's coming is not to fix the time of it as "just at hand" and then grow excited about it.

But the commonwealth to which we belong is in heaven, and from it we are eagerly awaiting the coming of a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will make our poor bodies over to resemble his glorious body, by exerting the power he has to subject everything to himself.<sup>2</sup>

The Lord is coming soon. Have no anxiety about anything, but make all your wants known to God in prayer and entreaty, and with thanksgiving.<sup>3</sup>

McCown maintains the Lawless One means the Antichrist and the restrains power is the Roman Empire, which is delaying the coming crisis until the elect may be evangelized.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Snowden,

p.160

2 Phil.3:20-21.

3 Phil.4:5.

4 McCow, The Promise of His Coming, p.173.



(16) The Church is the Body of Christ

The Christian doctrine of the Church is chiefly from St. Paul of Tarsus. To his Epistles we are indebted for the profoundest views of its nature and office. The Greek word which is translated Church EKKLECIA means assembly or congregation. Paul meant an assembly of God's people, a company of Christian believers, a congregation of disciples of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul uses the word "Church" both in a local and a universal sense. It denotes, for example, the company of Christians at Corinth, and the various individual assemblies in Galatia; it denotes also the entire body of believers in Corinth, in Galatia, and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

A second figure used by Paul to convey the church idea is "house of God."<sup>3</sup> This designation was of Jewish origin. Christians individually and as a congregation are a sample of God, a habitation of God in the Spirit.

A third figure in which Paul sets forth the idea of the Church is that of "the bride of Christ."<sup>4</sup> This is incidental, being introduced as a illustration into Paul's exhoratation to wives and husbands. Paul's conception of the Church's marriage with Christ is that it belongs to the future, since the church when presented to Christ is to

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor.1:2; Gal.1:2,13; 1 Cor.15:9; Eph.1:22; 3:10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess.1:1; Gal.1:2; Col.4:16.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim.3:15; Eph.2:22; 1Cor.3:16; 2 Cor.6:16.

<sup>4</sup> Eph.5:22-23.



be without spot or wrinkle, which will not be true until the consummation things. This conception of the Church as the bride of Christ plainly involved three fundamental ideas in Paul's mind - those of the Church's subjection to Christ, Christ's love of Church, and future ethical oneness of the two.<sup>1</sup>

The last figure in which the idea of the Church appears in the writings of St. Paul is peculiar to him. It is that of the Church as "the body of Christ."<sup>2</sup> According to this, Christ and the Church constitute a living organic whole. Members of the Church are members of Christ, each member having its own special function, and all the body making increase for him. The importance of the individual member and the unity of all the members are alike emphasized by St. Paul in this significant symbol. It expresses also the thought of the absolute subjection of the Church to Christ in all things.<sup>3</sup> He is the head of the Church in two senses, according to St. Paul. First, He is its head as the husband is the head of the wife, i.e., He is Lord of Church. He has authority over it. In this use of the term, Christ is thought of as distinct from the Church. But, second, He is also the head of the Church in this sense, that the two constitute the being typical of the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Eph.5:22-24; Eph.5:25-30; 5:31-32.

<sup>2</sup> Rom.12:5; 1 Cor.10:17; 12:27; Eph.1:22; 2:16; 4:4. 4:12,16; 5:23,30; Col.3:15.

<sup>3</sup> Eph.1:22,23.



This symbol of the Church as the body of Christ expresses the thought that the Church is necessary to the manifestation of Christ's life upon earth. It is His future, that alone on the earth which He fills, and in which He works,<sup>1</sup> or, perhaps better, it is His complement.<sup>2</sup> The individual believer, manifests the life of Jesus, but only a particular aspect of that life, not the whole of it. The entire company of Christian believers manifests the idea of Jesus far more perfectly than any individual member can. They together are His body, and the whole body is needful to the expression of the whole complex life.

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<sup>1</sup> Eph.1:25

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor.12:12-30.



#### IV. CONCLUSION

##### Christ as the Perfect Image of God

St. Paul's idea of Christ was, however, in the Pauline doctrine so intimately connected with Christianity as a principle of a new world-order of life that Christ as a person and Christ as a spiritual principle of cosmic significance are identical. Two orders of existence are constantly before his mind, and the shadows of the one are mingled with the light of the other in many of the most impressive expressions of his thought. On the one hand is the fleshly nature of man, in which sin and death are provided for as an inevitable result, though death is represented as the penalty of transgression.

At the head of this order stands the fleshly progenitor of the race "through whom sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death passed unto all, for that all sinned." <sup>1</sup> Here are those who sin under the law which, "holy, just, and good," is only an occasion of transgression, and has no saving efficiency. It "entered," indeed, "that the offence might abound," and apart from it "sin is dead."

Over against this gloomy world-order of sin and death the apostle places the new world-order of regeneration

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<sup>1</sup> Rom.5:13,14.



and life, Christianity and Christ conceived together as a principle of redemption and spiritual transformation.

At the head of this order of life stands "the man from heaven," "the last Adam," who was made a "quickening Spirit." Through him are to be done away the baneful evils of the former order of things for as many as shall believe in him "the man Christ Jesus," who had been revealed in St. Paul at his conversion, was the resurrection Lord of glory, and in his resurrection the apostle saw the hope of the victory over death for all in whom the Spirit should dwell. He was not thinking of the end of physical death, but of the taking away of the "sting of death," which is sin, through him who had destroyed it by his proposition.

The Pauline teaching of the Person of Christ thus presents an important phase of the development of Christological conceptions apparent in the New Testament. It stands in marked contrast with the Christology of the Petrine gospel, which saw in Jesus the Jewish Messiah whose mission had been interrupted by death, "whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restoration of all things whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets," and who was to set up at his coming his own "throne" of judgment upon the "nations" and twelve thrones for his twelve apostles. The conception which St. Paul set over against this was that of Christ as no spiritual representative of the human race which having gone down in death through the first Adam might through the



last Adam be raised to life and immortality. Men may differ as to whether or no the apostle had any historical or rational grounds for this doctrine, but no one can deny the grandeur of its main conception of the depth of insight and pure passion of aspiration with which when once free from the tangle of its dialectics it rushes upon its sublime conclusions. It occupies an intermediate position between the Christianity of the original apostles and that of the post-Pauline Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, and by its idea of the -re-existence of Christ prepared the way for the Johannine doctrine of the Logos, who was with God, and was God. In originality of conception, in mystic profundity and spiritual insight, it is preeminent among the Christologies of the early Church.

To St. Paul of Tarsus, Christ is everything, and his devotion is due to conviction and personal experience. "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord." <sup>1</sup> "This say I, yet not I but the Lord." <sup>2</sup> "I live, yet not I but the Lord." <sup>3</sup> He declares that He and all true believers have seen baptized into Christ's death; put on Christ; <sup>4</sup> have risen with Christ; <sup>5</sup> have the spirit of Christ. To him "the estimate of Jesus" meant that of the perfect man. <sup>6</sup> This estimate of Jesus is shown in the enumeration of what Paul calls "the fruit of the spirit," as seen in the disposition displayed in a true followers, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith. <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1Cor.9:1

<sup>4</sup> Gal.3:27.

<sup>7</sup> Gal.5:22.

<sup>2</sup> 1Cor.7:12.

<sup>5</sup> Col.3:1.

<sup>3</sup> Gal.2:20.

<sup>6</sup> Rom.3:9.



Finally, St. Paul believed that Jesus is the perfect image, the visible representative of the unseen God. He is the First-born, the absolute Heir of the Father, begotten before the ages; the Lord of the universe by virtue of primogeniture, and by virtue also of creative agency. For in Him and through Him the whole world was created, things in heaven, and things in earth, things visible to the outward perception. His supremacy is absolute and universal. All powers in heaven and earth are subject to Him. This subjection extends even to the most exalted and most potent of angelic beings, whether they be called Thrones or Dominations or Princedoms or Powers, or whatever title of dignity men may confer upon them. Yes, He is first and last. Through Jesus Christ, as the mediatorial word, the universe has been created; and unto him, as the final goal, it is tending. In Him is no before or after. He is pre-existent and self-existent before all the words. And in Him as the bidding and sustaining power, universal nature coheres and consists.

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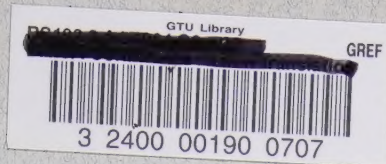












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